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T O _ U R

THROUGH THE

WESTERN, SOUTHERN, AND INTERIOR

PROVINCES OF FRANCE;

BY

N. W. WRAXALL, Esq.

10c

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A

T O U R, &c.

Carenten in Low Normandy,
Saturday, 26th August, 1775.

YOU shall be obeyed, my dear Sir; and I prepare myself with pleasure, to give you the same minute narration of the events which diversify my present tour, as I did in my last round the Baltic.

I landed in this kingdom, at Cherbourg, on Wednesday evening. The ruins of the pier, which was demolished by our troops in the late war, present a mournful picture of devastation, as they still remain exactly in the state they were left on the re-embarkation of the English in 1758. The town itself im-

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presses

David's Auth. 26 August 1775

presses a stranger with no high ideas of opulence or commerce. It is a wretched collection of houses crouded together in a sandy valley close to the shore; dirty, mean, and irregular. The situation alone, in the center of the channel, and between the two Capes of Barfleur and La Hogue, has made it always important in the eye of policy.

If Havre de Grace has been ever esteemed with reason, the key of High Normandy, Cherbourg is equally so of the Lower. During the many reigns in which it was subject to the English government, our princes appear to have been sensible of its full value. They often landed there, when called over by the revolts of their barons or subjects; and we find the Norman princes, who frequently resided at Winchester, usually embarking for this port, in preference to any other. A very strong garrison was generally maintained in it; and Charles the seventh terminated his long train of victories over the timid and divided counsels of our Henry the sixth, by this important conquest. It was re-annexed to the crown of France in 1450.—I am surprized to find that the French ministry have never
-fortified

THROUGH

fortified this city. Charle-Navarre, into whose hands it was sequestered in the fifteenth century, rebuilt it with walls in the Gothic style, which remained till Louis XIV. reign, who dismantled it, and ordered of fortifying it anew ; Louis XIV. Barbesieux, who was the favourite prince, found other means to squander the public money, in the same manner as the present century, and the throne.

About half a mile from the city, or rock of prodigious height, is reached by a long winding path, leading up the steep mountain. On the summit is a convent of Benedictine monks, who for so they term themselves, and to quit the vale below, and to reach the bleak summit, cultivated only in ground, barren and sterile, they must procure with difficulty a mule. One of them, the Superior, showed me the little chapel and the cross on the extreme point of the mountain, a crucifix. " This,"

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“ from whence John King of England is said
“ to have thrown his nephew, prince Arthur
“ of Bretagne. Tradition reports, that he
“ did it with his own hand, in a tempestuous
“ night ; and that the sea, which, though
“ now at some distance, then washed the foot
“ of the rock, received the body of the un-
“ happy prince.”—You remember, no doubt,
this part of the English history. It is, how-
ever, a very disputable fact, and there is scarce
any illustrious death the circumstances of
which are less ascertained than that in ques-
tion. It is certain that prince Arthur, after
having been conducted through several pro-
vinces, with ignominy, by his uncle King
John, finally disappeared in 1203.—But so
far are historians from positively naming the
time or manner of his exit, that they dis-
agree in the place of his confinement, previ-
ous to that event ; and whether he was im-
prisoned in the castle of Rouen, of Falaise, or
in that of Cherbourg—for these three are all
named—cannot precisely be determined.

There is another vestige of our English
monarchs yet in being here, which stands on
incontestable authority, and can plead more
than

than mere tradition. To the westward of the town, about a mile distant from it, a little rivulet empties itself into the sea, which is called the "Chanteraine." In a meadow, a few paces from the shore, stands a small chapel, which was built by Matilda, daughter of Henry the first, and mother of Henry the second. History relates, that in the reign of Stephen, who usurped the throne, she passed over from Wareham into Normandy, to raise fresh forces in support of her claim. Being attacked by a violent tempest at sea, she had recourse to the same means which Philip the second used at St. Quintin, and Clement the seventh at the sack of Rome, to avert the danger—I mean, prayers. It does not appear that she address'd herself to the Deity, or even to Jesus Christ; but, reposing her whole hope in the Virgin Mary, she made a vow that if she ever set her foot again on land, she would sing a hymn to the Virgin, on the spot where she first alighted. Her vows were heard; the storm abated, and she arrived happily. The instant she got on shore, one of the sailors reminded her of her promise, in these words, "Chante, reine, "vechi terre!" and as the words were

spoken exactly at the mouth of this rivulet, they gave rise to the name which it retains to this day. Not content with so small a mark of her gratitude, she erected the chapel which I have mention'd, and which is called "Notre Dame du Vœu." I went into it. The story is there recorded at length. The architecture bears every mark of extreme rudeness and barbarism, such as characterised the age in which it was built. Six centuries, which have elapsed since its construction, have loosened the stones that compose it, and begin to threaten its total demolition. As I went out, I remarked an iron box, apparently coeval with the chapel; and over it, on the wall, in characters almost erased, was a little inscription, signifying, that it was intended for charitable donations towards repairing "Our Lady du Vœu."

Cherbourg pretends to very high antiquity. It is said to have been originally called Cæsarbourg. Richard the second duke of Normandy, and uncle to William the Conqueror, built a strong castle here, and having come in person to view it, was so pleased with the situation of the place, and its importance, as it appeared

peared to him for the defence of his dominions, that he exclaimed in a rapture, " *Ly " castel est un cher bourg per mi !*" This trifling circumstance was the origin of its present name. Coins of several Roman emperors have been dug up here at different times ; and a gentleman shewed me one, in fine preservation, of Antoninus Pius, found only a few years since. Other traditions confirm this fact ; and the beautiful " *Val-de-Saire,*" which lies in the eastern part of the *Coutentin*, near *Cape Barfleur*, is said to be a corruption of " *Val-de-Ceres,*" by which name the Romans called it, in honour of that goddess, from its extraordinary fertility.

I left *Cherbourg* yesterday morning, and after dining at *Valognes*, a considerable town, arrived here last night. I would have proceeded for *Coutances* this morning, but the marriage of *Madame Clotilde* to the prince of *Piedmont* has left the provinces without horses, as they are ordered to *Paris*, to convey the princess and her suite to *Turin*. I am therefore under the necessity of staying here till to-morrow ; and, for want of other amusement, I have wandered over this place, and its environs.

The town is small, but the ruins of the castle are very beautiful. It is celebrated in the civil wars under Charles the ninth, and in those of the League which followed, in the reigns of Henry the third and fourth. The architecture of the great church is elegant ; it was built in the fifteenth century, when the Gothic structures had almost attained to their highest point of beauty and perfection. There was nothing in the inside which merited attention, except an altar, and a painting dedicated to St. Cæcilia. The sweet saint appears playing on a sort of harpsichord, her fingers running negligently over the keys. A blue mantle loosely buckled over her shoulder exposes part of her neck to view, and her fair hair floats down her back. The balls of her eyes are thrown up to heaven in a fine frenzy of musical enthusiasm.—If there were many such canonized beauties in the Romish calendar, it would be a dangerous religion. The heart raises altars to them without the aid of piety.

I shall continue my remarks as I proceed.

Coutances, Monday, 28th August, 1775.

IT is only six leagues from Carenten to this city ; but the road, even at this season of the year, is so bad, that those of Westphalia and Brandenburg are fine in comparison. The roads of Low Normandy are infamous to a proverb ; and I should never have had the boldness to venture through them, if I had before known how bad they were. Coutances has, however, in some degree, made amends for the difficulties I found in arriving at it, and repaid me by the objects it affords of entertainment. It was founded by the Romans, who established a legion here, and called it “ *Castra Constantia*.” They fortified it with very strong walls, which remained till Louis the eleventh’s reign ; who demolished them, because the place, being part of the domain of his brother Charles duke of Normandy, refused to admit a royal garrison. It stands on a hill, the sides of which descend with prodigious rapidity. Beyond the vale, a range of hills rises like a superb amphitheatre, and surrounds it on every side. The houses bear all the marks of antiquity in their

structure and taste, which is rude to the greatest degree. Many of them have doubtless stood five or six hundred years; and on one, the style of which merits peculiar attention, is the date 1007 yet remaining in very legible characters.

On the summit of the hill, in the center of the town, stands the cathedral. I have passed several hours in the examination of its architecture. There is a grotesque beauty spread over the whole; and the fantastic ornaments of Gothic building are mixed with a wonderful delicacy and elegance in many of its parts. It was begun in 1047; and William the Conqueror, king of England, assisted in person at its consecration some years after. I went up to the top of the great center tower, to enjoy one of the finest prospects imaginable. The town of Granville appears in front, and beyond it the little islands of Chaufey. Jersey, at the distance of seven leagues to the north, forms a noble object. The country on all sides, towards St. Lo, Avranches, and Carenten, is a garden, rich, cultivated, and shaded with woods. They say that a certain barbarous monk, named St. Ereptiole, founded this see as early as the year 430, in the
reign

reign of the emperor Theodosius the second; and under the papacy of Celestine the first.— Henry the fifth, king of England, made himself master of the city in the year 1418, after a short siege; but it returned to the crown of France under the declining power of the house of Lancaster.

Coutances is large, but the convents form a considerable part of its size, and the monks of different orders, a great part of its inhabitants. As it is situated at two leagues distant from the sea, and has not any navigable river, there is no commerce; but some few provincial noblesse reside in the place.

I am charmed with the Coutentin: all this part of Low Normandy is so called. From Cherbourg to Valognes, it was mountainous and heathy; but in general the country is inferior to no part of the north of Europe. Fine acclivities clothed with wood, and rich vallies covered with harvests, form a most pleasing scene. There is notwithstanding an apparent penury in the dwellings of the people. The hand of oppression is visible in their dress, their hovels, and their whole appearance. I saw none of those neat and pretty peasants so common in our most secluded villages.

The Coutentin has given birth to some illustrious men. Those brave and romantic heroes so famous in ancient story, Tancred, and Robert Guiscard, who, after having expelled the Saracens from Apulia and Calabria, founded the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, which they transmitted to their descendants, were Counts of Hauteville, a little town not far from Valognes. History informs us, that Robert duke of Normandy, son to William the Conqueror, the most generous and the most necessitous prince of his age, mortgaged this part of his dominions to his brother Rufus, before he went to the Holy Land. The sum, if I remember right, which he received for it, was only ten thousand marks, which the rapacious Rufus levied on his English subjects.

You see I call in history or tradition to my assistance every moment. Indeed it is impossible to travel through this duchy, where our ancient monarchs so frequently held their residence, without being continually reminded of some of those anecdotes transmitted to us respecting them. Adieu !

In the evening I proceed to Granville..

Granville,

Granville, Wednesday, 30th August, 1775.

THERE is perhaps no pleasure greater, than that of communicating pleasure received; and, as admiration is one of the most elegant and interesting sources from which it can be drawn, we usually listen with extreme readiness to any addresses made to that passion. I wish to prepare you for a recital, in which the marvellous and the astonishing may predominate; though you may do me the justice to believe, they will ever be under the guidance of truth.

Superstition, the parent of a thousand evils to mankind, has yet given rise to such extraordinary and magnificent productions in every age, as almost incline one to pardon her crimes and follies. I am just returned from the survey of one of these; and I shall endeavour to address my imperfect description of it to your heart and affections.

I left Coutances Monday evening. The distance to this town is only six leagues, through a continuation of the same agreeable country.

country which I have already described. As I was desirous to visit the celebrated "Mont St. Michel," I hired two horses, and set out early yesterday morning. It is about twenty miles from Granville, and the road lying along the sea-shore, makes it very pleasant. I got to Genet, a little village, before noon. From thence it is only a league to the Mount; but as the road is entirely across the sands which are only passable at low tide, it becomes indispensibly requisite to procure a guide. I did so, and arrived there at one in the afternoon.

This extraordinary rock—for it is no more, rises in the middle of the bay of Avranches. Nature has completely fortified one side, by its craggy and almost perpendicular ascent, which renders it impracticable for courage or address however consummate, to scale or mount it. The other parts are surrounded by walls fenced with semilunar towers in the Gothic manner; but sufficiently strong, added to the advantages of its situation, to withstand any attack. At the foot of the mountain, begins a street or town, which winds round its base to a considerable height. Above, are chambers
in

in which prisoners of state are confined, and other buildings intended for persons to reside in; and on the summit is built the abbey itself, occupying a prodigious space of ground, and of a strength and solidity equal to its enormous size, since it has withstood all the storms of Heaven, in this elevated and exposed situation, during many centuries.—I passed the whole afternoon in the different parts of the edifice; and as the Swiss who conducted me through it, found he could not gratify my curiosity too minutely, we left no apartment or chamber unseen.

The “*Salle de Chevalerie*,” or knights’ hall, reminded me of that at Marienbourg in Polish Prussia. It is equally spacious; but more barbarous and rude, because some hundred years prior in its construction. Here the knights of St. Michael used to meet in solemn convocation on important occasions. They were the defenders and guardians of this mountain and abbey, as those of the temple, and of St. John of Jerusalem, were of the holy sepulchre.—At one end is a painting of the archangel, the patron of their order; and in this hall Louis the eleventh first instituted the order,
and

and invested with the insignia of it the knights of the cross of St. Michael.

We passed on through several lesser rooms into a long passage, on one side of which the Swiss opened a door, and through a narrow entrance, perfectly dark, he led me, by a second door, into an apartment, or dungeon—for it rather merited the latter than the former appellation—in the middle of which stood a cage. It was composed of prodigious wooden bars; and the wicket which admitted persons into it, was ten or twelve inches in thickness. I went into the inside: the space it comprised, was about twelve feet square or fourteen, and it might be nearly twenty feet in height. This was the abode of many eminent victims in former ages, whose names and miseries are now forgotten.

“ There was,” said my conductor, “ towards the latter end of the last century, a
“ compiler of news in Holland, who had presumed to print some very severe reflections
“ on Madame de Maintenon, and Louis the
“ fourteenth. Some months afterwards, he
“ was induced, by a person sent expressly for
“ that purpose, to make a tour into French
“ Flanders.

“ Flanders. The instant he had quitted the
 “ Dutch dominions, he was put under arrest,
 “ and immediately, by his majesty’s express
 “ command, conducted to this place. They
 “ shut him up in this cage. Here he lived
 “ upwards of three-and-twenty years; and
 “ here he, at length, expired.—During
 “ the long nights of winter,” continued the
 man, “ no candle or fire was allowed him,
 “ nor was he permitted to have any book.
 “ He saw no human face except that of the
 “ gaoler, who came once every day to present
 “ him, thro’ a hole in the wicket, with his
 “ little portion of bread and wine. No in-
 “ strument was given him with which he
 “ could destroy himself; but he found means
 “ at length to draw out a nail from the wood,
 “ with which he cut on the bars of his cage,
 “ several fleurs de lis and coats of arms, the
 “ engraving of which formed his only em-
 “ ployment and recreation.”—These I saw,
 and they are indeed very curiously performed,
 with so rude a tool.

As I stood within this dreadful engine of
 cruelty, I execrated the vengeance of the
 prince, who, for so slight a trespass could
 inflict

inflict so disproportionate and tremendous a punishment, and I hastened out of this sad apartment, impressed with feelings of the deepest pity and indignation.

“ It is now fifteen years,” said the Swiss,
“ since a gentleman ended his days in that cage;
“ it was before the time when I came to reside
“ here; but there is one instance within my
“ own memory. Monsieur de F——, a person
“ of rank, was conducted here by command
“ of the late king, and remained three years
“ shut up in it. I fed him myself every day;
“ but he was allowed books and candle to
“ divert his misery; and at length, the abbot,
“ touched with his deplorable calamities, re-
“ quested and obtained for him the royal par-
“ don. He was set free, and is now alive in
“ France.

“ The subterranean chambers,” added he,
“ in this mountain, are so numerous, that we
“ know them not ourselves. There are cer-
“ tain dungeons, called “ Oubliettes,” into
“ which they were accustomed formerly to
“ let down malefactors guilty of very heinous
“ crimes: they provided these wretches with
“ a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine, and
“ then

“ then they were totally forgotten, and left
 “ to perish by hunger in the dark vaults of
 “ the rock. This punishment has not how-
 “ ever been inflicted by any king in the last
 “ or present century.”

We continued our progress through the abbey. He led me into a chamber, in one corner of which was a kind of window ; between it and the wall of the building, was a very deep space or hollow of near a hundred feet perpendicular, and at bottom was another window, opening to the sea. It is called “ The hole of Montgomeri.” The history of it is this.—You may recollect that in the year 1559, Henry the second king of France, was unfortunately killed at a tournament by the Count de Montgomeri. It was not intended on that nobleman’s part ; and he was forced, contrary to his inclination, to push the lance against his sovereign, by his express command. He was a Hugonot, and having escaped the massacre of Paris, made head against the royal forces in Normandy, being supported by our Elizabeth with arms and money. When driven from his fortresses in those parts, he retired to a rock, called the
 “ Tombelaine.”

"Tombelaine." This is another Mountain, similar to the "Mont St. Michel," only three quarters of a league distant from it, and of nearly equal dimensions. At that time there was a castle on it, which was afterwards demolished, and of which scarce any traces now remain. From this place of security, only accessible at low tides, he continually made excursions, and annoyed the enemy, who never dared to attack him. He coined money, laid all the adjacent country under contribution, and rendered himself universally dreaded. Being desirous to surprize the "Mont St. Michel," he found means to engage in his interests one of the monks resident in the abbey, who promised to give him the signal for his enterprize, by displaying a handkerchief. The treacherous monk having made the signal, betrayed him, and armed all his associates, who waited Montgomeri's arrival. The Count came, attended by fifty chosen soldiers, desperate, and capable of any attempt. They crossed the sand, and having placed their scaling-ladders, mounted one by one; as they came to the top, they were dispatched each in turn, without noise. Montgomeri, who followed

followed last, at length discovered the perfidy, and escaped with only two of his men, with whom he regained the "Tombelaine." They preserve with great care, the ladders and grappling irons used on this occasion.— You perhaps remember the subsequent fate of the Count himself. He was afterwards besieged and taken prisoner by the *Marechal de Matignon*, in 1574, at *Domfront* in *Normandy*; and *Catherine of Medicis*, who detested him for his having been, tho' innocently, the cause of her husband's death, ordered him to be immediately executed.

The church itself detained me a long time, and is matter of great curiosity. It is supported by nine pillars of most enormous dimensions, which stand upon the solid rock. I did not measure them; but, as far as the gloominess of the place would admit me to form a judgment, I apprehend that each of them must be five-and-twenty feet in circumference: besides these, there are two others, of much inferior size, which support the center of the church, over which is the tower. If the prodigious incumbent weight and the nature of the situation is considered, nothing less

less massy could sustain the building. They seem as if they were designed to outlive the ravages of time, and the convulsions of nature.—But before we enter the church itself, I must inform you of the absurd and legendary cause which first produced it.

In the reign of Childebert the second, king of France, there was a bishop of Avranches named St. Aubert. To this holy man, the archangel Michael was pleased to appear one night, and order him to go to this rock, and there construct a church. St. Aubert, who seems to have been a little incredulous, treated it as a dream : the angel came again, repeated his injunction, and not being obeyed, the third time, he, by way of imprinting it on the bishop's memory, made a hole in his skull, by touching it with his thumb. In the treasury of the church I saw this curious skull. It is enclosed in a little shrine of gold, and a chrystal, which opens over the orifice, gratifies curiosity by the minutest examination of it. The hole is of a size and shape justly proportioned to the thumb supposed to have produced it, and whether it is done with a knife, or by what other means,

I cannot

I cannot determine. The bishop however, upon this sensible mark of the divine pleasure, delayed no longer ; but repairing to the rock, constructed a small church, as he had been commanded. — Here fable ends ; and true history, supplying its place, informs us, that it was in 966, that Richard the second duke of Normandy began to build the abbey. It was compleated about the year 1070, under William the Conqueror, tho' many other additions were made to it by succeeding abbots and princes.

The treasury is crouded with innumerable relics, among which some few have a real and intrinsic value. There is a fine head of Charles the sixth of France cut in chrystal, which drew my attention. They have got, Heaven knows by what means, an arm of Edward the Confessor ; and they shewed me another, of “ St. Richard, king of England.” Who this saint and prince was, I confess, is beyond my comprehension. I am sure they could not term Richard the first so, unless his crusade against Saladine wiped out all his sins, and canonized him. Richard the second has no better pretensions to sanctity. I do not
mention

mention him who fell at Bosworth ; so that who this royal saint was, I must leave you to discover. As to the monks, they know nothing about it ; but they were positive he was a king of England.—An enormous golden cockle-shell, weighing many pounds, given by Richard the second duke of Normandy, when he founded the abbey, is worth remarking.

In the middle of the choir hangs a stone, which is said to have fallen on the head of Louis the eleventh, at the siege of Befançon, without doing him the smallest injury. This, he conceived, and with reason, must have been owing to some divine interposition ; for the stone weighs, I should suppose, at least ten pounds. Louis, though the greatest monster who ever filled a throne, was yet, at intervals, exceedingly pious : he used to come often in pilgrimage to the “ Mont St. Michel ;” and he ordered this stone to be suspended by a chain in the choir, and left the income of certain lands for the maintenance of priests, who were to say masses for his preservation from so imminent a danger.

The refectory, the cloisters, the cells of
the

the monks, are all, (or rather they have been) very magnificent, and spacious; but a vast sum of money is now wanted to put the whole in repair, and reinstate what the lapse of ages defaces and deforms. One of the great towers is cracked and decayed. They have written repeatedly to the ministry, to know his majesty's pleasure respecting it; but no answer has been returned. It will probably fall soon, and must necessarily, from its prodigious height and size, draw with it a considerable part of the adjoining buildings.

The late king Louis the fifteenth sequestered the revenues of the abbey, which are very ample. A prior is substituted instead of the abbot, and the number of monks is reduced from thirty to fourteen. Perhaps a few years more may even extinguish these; and St. Michael himself, tho' composed of gold, be melted down to support the expence of a *bal paré*.— It is at present considered chiefly as a prison of state, and will probably be repaired more on that account, than from motives of piety, or veneration for its religious origin. The apartments are at this time occupied by many illustrious

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prisoners,

prisoners, who have been sent here by "Lettre de cachet," for crimes of state. They are detained in more strict or easy confinement, according to the royal mandate. There are at present, eight in one range of rooms, who eat at the same table together. They are allowed each a pint of wine ; but neither knives or forks are ever given them, lest they should commit suicide, to escape the horrors of imprisonment. No person is permitted to enter that division of the abbey in which they live, or can hold any conversation with them. Four of these were sent here since the accession of his present majesty. There are others who have the liberty of going into every part of the Mount without restraint ; but to enjoy this permission they must be habited as priests, and of consequence be known to every one. To escape, seems almost impossible—but what cannot human subtlety effect, when pushed to despair ? It is only sixteen days since a Monsieur de C——, who had been confined ten months, succeeded in an attempt to liberate himself. I was shewn the place from whence he let himself down by a rope : it is near a hundred feet perpendicular. He crossed the
sands

sands immediately, while the sea was low; and it is imagined he has embarked either for Jersey or for England, as no intelligence has been received concerning him.

Some apartments are destined to a species of wretches yet more deplorable—I mean, to lunatics. There are several here who are of high rank. In the cloisters of the abbey, a person accosted me in very polite terms. He appeared to be above fifty years of age; his dress was mean, and at his button-hole hung a cross of the order of St. Michael, fantastically adorned with ribbands. His face, tho' brown and sickly, was noble, commanding, and engaging; his hair, of a deep black, mixed with grey, hung floating upon his shoulders; and over his whole person was an air of dignity in ruin. It was the Marquis de R—, a nobleman of Bretagne, who has been shut up here five-and-twenty years. He is insane, but harmless, and observes perfectly all the forms of politeness and good breeding.—None but persons of quality are ever sent here on this account.

I thought the age of pilgrimages had been nearly at an end in all European nations, and

that devotion was now content with venerating its saints at home—but will you believe it, when I assure you, that the number of pilgrims who come annually to pay their vows to St. Michael at this Mount, amounts to between eight and ten thousand? They are mostly peasants, and persons in mean occupations; but even among the nobility there are not wanting those who are induced to make this journey from principles of piety. The little town at the foot of the Mount is sometimes so crowded with them, that not a bed is to be procured. I saw at least six when I was there. They were all young men and women. Their dress exactly corresponded with our ideas of them, as drawn from ancient ballads. Their hats were laced with cockle-shells round the edges, and on the crown was a gilt coronet, above which was the cross. A ribband in the same form was tied across their breast; and all over their cloaths were placed little images of St. Michael vanquishing the devil. I asked them, from whence they came? they said, from Champagne; a very considerable distance, across all France. I put several questions to them, and they would

would willingly have followed me when I went up to the top of the steeple ; but the Swiss, who was well accustomed to see these poor devotees arrive, repulsed them very roughly. “ Que diable ! ” says he, “ allez, prier le bon Saint Michel, si vous voulez ! Je ne conduis pas le menu peuple ! ” The poor pilgrims retired immediately, without a word.—It is said, that the late Dauphin, father of the present king, was here incognito, about nineteen or twenty years ago ; and the old man who conducted me across the sands, assured me that he had the honour to be his royal highness’s guide, without knowing at the time his rank. The character of the Dauphin was that of a bigot, and I am not at all surprized at such a proof of it.—Near the foot of the mountain, close to the waves of the sea, is a very fine well of fresh water ; but as it might and would be undoubtedly taken possession of by an enemy in case of a siege, they have contrived to form cisterns in the solid rock, proportionate to every other part of the building, and capable of containing many hundred tuns of water ; they say, more than twelve hundred. Indeed, to besiege the mountain, would be an act of madness ; as a hundred

men might defend it against ten thousand assailants, and any number of vessels ; nor could it be, if taken, converted to any sort of national benefit.

The town itself is almost as much an object of curiosity as any other part of the Mount. I doubt not that there are many houses in it above five or six hundred years old ; and I did not see one which seemed to be built since the time of Louis the eleventh. The whole number of persons resident in the abbey and in the town, does not exceed a hundred and eighty, in time of peace. A militia, composed of the inhabitants, mounts guard, to prevent any of the prisoners from escaping. In time of war there are five hundred soldiers commonly in garrison ; and they assured me, so large and numerous are the chambers in different parts of the abbey, that thirteen thousand troops might be disposed of there without any sort of inconvenience, or difficulty.

They sell little legendary books in the town, and I have bought them all, in hopes to find some historical anecdotes or traditions respecting the place, and the various important events

events or sieges it has undergone ;—but alas ! this is a vain attempt. They are all stuffed with miracles and absurdities, too ridiculous to repeat ; and St. Michael and St. Aubert are the only heroes who make any figure in these annals. I would most willingly have inspected the archives which are laid up in the abbey ; but this gratification is not permitted to strangers. It must be a very curious research, since it is probable that every king of England from William the Conqueror down to Henry the third, must have been many times here from motives of devotion or curiosity.

In the year 1090, Robert duke of Normandy, and William Rufus king of England, sons of William the Conqueror, besieged their younger brother Henry a long time in the “ Mont St. Michel.” It must be presumed that they were masters of the foot of the rock ; for otherwise it would be impracticable to invest it. The prince could never have been reduced to surrender from force ; but he was in want of water, and from that necessity was on the point of yielding up the fortress, when Robert, with the benevolence and generosity which marked his character,

sent him some pipes of wine ; and this succour, (like that which Henry the fourth permitted his troops to give the Parisians,) enabled Henry to hold out. Rufus reproached Robert for his conduct ; “ Shall we then,” said he, “ suffer our brother to die of thirst ? ” — And what return did he meet with from Henry ? An imprisonment of twenty-eight years in a vaulted chamber of Cardiff castle, where he expired.

I fear I have tired you with so minute a description of the mountain. I left it this morning, and, being conducted by the same guide across the sands, reached the village of Genet at ten. Numbers of people are drowned every year in passing this place. The sea comes in with a rapidity beyond any idea you can form of it, and frequently intercepts unhappy travellers, who presume to venture without a guide. I saw, in the church-yard of Genet, a grave where five persons were buried, who perished as they attempted to pass within these few days, and similar accidents are common.—It was noon when I returned to Granville, my fancy entirely occupied with the extraordinary scenes
to

to which I had been a witness, and which I have endeavoured to describe to you without study or arrangement.

This town is situated very pleasantly on a neck of land stretching into the sea. It is not small; but the buildings are scattered, mean, and irregular, extending near a mile from one extremity to the other, part on the rock above, and part in the vale below.—It is open to the sea, there being no bay, tho' they have constructed part of a pier to shelter and protect the shipping. Some small redoubts and batteries have likewise been erected during the late war, on the eminences round the place, to defend it from invasion; but they are of no strength.

It is time to conclude this long letter. My next will probably be written from some part of Bretagne. Adieu!

Yours, &c.

St. Malo, Tuesday, 4th September, 1775.

I Arrived here yesterday morning. It was very late Saturday night when I reached Avranches; and had I been a Roman Catholic, I should certainly have put both myself and my carriage under the protection of the Virgin, or of some saint who is the tutelary patron of travellers, before I ventured into these perilous roads. The chaise once stuck fast for near an hour, and I was obliged to employ a dozen peasants, who with the help of pick-axes, and with infinite labour, at length lifted it up by main strength.

Avranches detained me a few hours. The city is the meanest I have yet seen in France, but its situation is very fine. The cathedral stands on a hill, which terminates abruptly, the front of the church extending to the extreme verge of it, and overhanging the precipice. It bears the marks of high antiquity, but the towers are decayed in many places, tho' its original construction has been wonderfully strong. While I stood near it, one of the
priests

priests very politely accosted me, and offer'd, as I appeared to be a stranger, to give me some information respecting it.

“ The cathedral,” said he, “ has been the
 “ work of different ages ; but the two wes-
 “ tern towers are supposed to be as old as the
 “ eighth century, the bishopric itself having
 “ been founded about the year 400. One of
 “ the English kings, Henry the second, re-
 “ ceived absolution here from the Papal
 “ Nuncio, for the murder of St. Thomas-
 “ à-Becket, in 1172, and the stone on which
 “ he knelt during the performance of that
 “ solemn ceremony, still exists.” He car-
 ried me to look at the stone. Its length is
 about thirty inches, and the breadth twelve.
 It stands before the north portal, and on it is
 engraved a chalice in commemoration of the
 event.

The ruins of the castle of Avranches are
 very extensive, and beneath lies a rich extent
 of country, covered with orchards, and
 abounding in grain.

I continued my journey on Sunday at noon,
 and quitting Normandy, reached the city of
 Dol in Bretagne the same evening. At Pon-

torson the two provinces are separated by the little river Coesnon, which forms the boundary.—Dol must detain every person who has any veneration for the remains of antiquity. Except the episcopal palace, which is an elegant modern building, there is not a house within the walls, which does not seem to have been built in ages the most barbarous and remote. The fortifications are in the same style, and appear to have been antiently very formidable. History confirms this supposition. William the Conqueror twice laid siege to Dol, and was twice repulsed. In 1075, Philip king of France forced him to make a hasty retreat into Normandy; and when he again attempted to make himself master of it in 1085, Alain duke of Bretagne obliged him to retire with some disgrace. Henry the second, more successful, carried Dol by storm in 1173.

It was a beautiful autumnal evening, and I walked near half a league from the town to view a singular object of curiosity. In the middle of a very large orchard stands a single stone, between forty and fifty feet high: its circumference near the base equals its height, and the form is circular and conical. It is called

“ La

“La Pierre du champ dolent.”—“The stone of the field of lamentation.” There are no certain accounts when, or on what occasion it was erected; but the traditions relative to it are equally numerous and contradictory. I had the pleasure to see and converse with the gentleman on whose estate it is situated. He said, the most approved opinion was, that Julius Cæsar had caused it to be erected as a trophy to mark the extent of his conquests, after a bloody engagement which he gained over the inhabitants of Armorica. The peasants are fully persuaded that the devil set it up in one of his idle hours; “but,” added he, “I have myself caused the earth to be removed round its base to the distance of forty feet on every side; and I find that it joins to a prodigious rock, from which it seems to have sprung; so that I am induced to think, notwithstanding its name, that it may be a natural production.” However caused, it is very extraordinary, and deserves an attentive investigation.

I got to this city yesterday. The castle of St. Malo was built by the celebrated Anne of Bretagne, who annexed the duchy to the crown
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of France by her marriage with Charles the eighth in 1489. She was asked by the engineer who constructed it, what plan she would choose as its model. "My coach," said she. It is so in effect. A large square area within, constitutes the body; two small towers in the fore-part answer to the fore-wheels of a carriage, as two others of a larger size do to the hinder ones; a projection in front forms the pole, and an arched nich behind corresponds to the place where the servant was used to stand. Conscious that posterity might accuse her of caprice and absurdity, she has obviated their criticisms in a manner truly royal, by an inscription engraved on the wall, and very legible at this hour—

"Qui que gronde, tel est mon plaisir!"

You will allow this to be the reasoning of a sovereign.

St. Malo is situated in an island joined to the continent by a causeway. The ancient city and bishopric were half a league distant, upon the main-land; but in the year 1172, the bishop, John de la Grille removed his residence
to

to the little island of St. Aaron, and began the town which now exists. The houses are all lofty and elegant; but the streets, owing to the want of ground and to the number of inhabitants, are narrow, dirty, and ill pierced.

To-morrow I proceed to Rennes.

Nantes, Saturday, 16th September, 1775.

I Left St. Malo last Thursday se'nnight, and lay at Hedé, a little town situated on the summit of a mountain, which commands a most extensive prospect. I got to the city of Rennes next morning. Here I had flattered myself with the pleasure of seeing the celebrated Monsieur de la Chalotais, who, after having suffered, under Louis the fifteenth, all the punishments which despotism can inflict, is now returned to pass the little remainder of his days in his native province of Bretagne. I had received very particular letters to introduce me to his acquaintance ; but he was gone to his seat at Caradeuc, the preceding day. To the honour of his present majesty and of the ministry, they have endeavoured to make him every possible compensation for the cruel indignities which he met with under the late reign. The king has presented him with three hundred thousand livres, besides a pension. He is restored to his place of " Procureur general au parlement ;" and his estate of Caradeuc is to be erected into a marquisate.

I staid

I staid near two days at Rennes. It is the honorary capital of Bretagne, because the states are assembled there ; but like all cities destitute of commerce, is dull and poor. Several of the principal streets are however very handsome, a fire which happen'd in the year 1720, and which almost reduced the whole place to ashes, having obliged the inhabitants to rebuild them with great regularity. In one of the squares, is a fine bronze statue of Louis the fifteenth, which was erected by the province in 1744, soon after his recovery from that dangerous illness in Flanders, which obtained him the title of " Bien-aimé. Under the figure of the prince appears on one side Hygeia, the goddess of health, with her serpent and patera ; and on the other, is the genius of Bretagne, kneeling on one knee, exultation and reverence finely marked in her countenance. At the foot of the pedestal is an inscription in Latin. I blushed as I read it, for the monarch to whom it was offered. He lived, like his predecessor, to see all these marks of public approbation cease ; and, lost to greatness and glory in the arms of his mistresses, a dark cloud obscured the evening
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of a reign, which he had opened with some applause.

Rennes is situate on the little river Vilaine, and was anciently very strongly fortified, but the walls are now in ruins, and the ditch nearly filled up. The siege of the city by Edward the third king of England, is very celebrated in history. The English and Breton army consisted of forty thousand men; and nevertheless, after having remained before it six months, were obliged to retire without success.

I arrived here on Monday last. Nantes is a noble city, and its situation is equally advantageous and agreeable, being built on the easy declivity of a hill, descending on every side to the river. The Loire itself may almost vie with the Thames. Exactly opposite to the spot on which stands the town, it is divided into several channels, by a number of small islands, most of which are covered with elegant houses. The great quay is more than a mile in length; the buildings very superb, and chiefly erected since the late peace, in 1763. As its commerce is annually encreasing the city is consequently in a state of continual

tinual improvement, and advance in beauty: The Loire is notwithstanding very shallow; and all goods are brought up in large boats from Painbeuf, which is nine leagues distant, near the mouth of the river, and at which place vessels of burden are obliged to unload. At the eastern extremity of the town stands the castle, in which the ancient dukes of Bretagne held their residence. It was built about the year 1000; but the duke of Mercœur, who during the long wars of the League, in the sixteenth century, rendered himself in some degree sovereign of this province, made several considerable additions to it. In the chapel, Anne, duchess of Bretagne; and widow of Charles the eighth; married Louis the twelfth in 1499; and by this second union, confirmed the duchy to the crown of France. They showed me the chamber in which the celebrated Cardinal de Retz was confined by order of Anne of Austria, and from which he made his escape by letting himself down with a rope into a boat, which waited for him on the Loire.

Many of the ancient dukes of Bretagne are interred in the different churches of the city. The most splendid of all the monuments erected

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to their memory, is that of Francis the second, who was the last of them. It is in the "Eglise des Carmes," and was raised by filial duty. His daughter Anne caused it to be constructed, while she was queen of France. Michael Columb, a Breton by birth, was the artist; and it must be confessed to be a master-piece of sculpture. The tomb is as magnificent as any of those in the abby of St. Denis; and not content with this proof of her attachment to her father's memory, Anne ordered her own heart to be deposited within a golden box, in the same vault.—The inscription near the tomb, is very curious. It relates that Francis the second, after having been married seven years to his first wife without issue, as his last resource, made a vow to the Virgin Mary, that if by her power or intercession he obtained a child, he would dedicate to her an image of his own weight in gold. The holy Virgin, whether moved by the prodigious value of the present, or whether touched with pity, heard the prayer very favourably. The duke had a son, and performed his vow; tho' exigencies of state obliged him some years afterwards to retract the princely

princely donation he had made.—By his second wife Margaret de Foix, he became father to the princess Anne, afterwards queen of France.

Nantes was anciently, like almost every considerable city in Europe, very strongly fortified. Peter de Dreux, one of the dukes of Bretagne, surrounded it with walls, which have only been demolished within these few years. The bridge is an object of curiosity. It is near a mile and a half in length, being continued across all the little islands in the Loire, from north to south. There are two other smaller rivers, which unite at this city, one of which is called the Erdre. I went up this river about two leagues yesterday, to a gentleman's Chateau, where I dined. The Meander, so famous in Grecian fable, can hardly exceed the Erdre in beauty. It winds between groves of chestnut, oak, and poplar, which cover the banks to the edge of the water, and which are only broken by vineyards, gardens, and elegant villas. About half way, are the ruins of a celebrated fortress, formerly possessed by the Hugonots, called the castle "de la Verriere;" and at the distance of a mile from the house where I passed the day,
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is an ancient mansion furrounded with thick woods, which belonged to Peter Landais, the famous and unworthy favourite of Francis the second.

Bretagne is by no means so fertile or so cultivated a province as Normandy. The interior part is chiefly open and heathy, but the sea-coasts are more populous, and richer in soil. Round this city, and to the southward, in the " Pays de Retz," vines are very plentiful, and they make a thin, four wine, known by the name of " Vin Nan-tois."——If we compare the present condition of Bretagne, as constituting a part of the kingdom of France, with its ancient one as an independent government, there can be no doubt that the change which incorporated it with the monarchy, was the most salutary and happy to be conceived. While under the dominion of their native princes, the duchy was a scene of continual war, bloodshed, and devastation. The dukes of Normandy, or kings of France, were ever aiming at its reduction, and the former effected it more than once. The intestine commotions which were raised by the opposite pretensions of John de Montfort and Charles of Blois, in
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the fourteenth century, left the miserable country unpeopled, desolate, and a prey to the most severe famine. Louis the eleventh first open'd the way for its re-union to the crown. The lady of Beaujeu, left regent at his death, pursued her father's measures with vigour; and the narrow, parsimonious character and conduct of our Henry the seventh, whose avarice prevented him from lending any effectual succour to Francis the second or his daughter Anne, conspired to complete this important acquisition.

—I do not recollect many very eminent persons, whom this duchy has produced. Bertrand du Guesclin, Constable of France, and so renowned in the wars of Edward the third and the Black Prince, was a native of Bretagne; and Abélard, Heloise's unhappy lover, too well known by his amours and his misfortunes, was born at a village called Le Palet, only ten or twelve miles from Nantes, near the borders of Poictou. He lived in the twelfth century, under the reign of Conan the third, duke of Bretagne.

The origin of Nantes is very uncertain, and is carried back into remote antiquity. The Romans doubtless had a station here.

In

In the year 1580, among the ruins of a tower demolished at that time, was found a stone, which, by order of the magistrates, was transferred in 1606 to the "Hotel de Ville." The inscription on it has greatly exercised the attention of antiquaries. It is very legible, and in Roman characters. I transcribed it myself.

" Numinib: Augustor:

" Deo: Vol: Jano.

" M: Gemel: Secundus. et C. Sedat: Florus.

" Astor: Vicanor. Portent. Tribunal. C. M.

" Locis ex Stipe conlata posuerunt."

I cannot forbear mentioning to you one other monument equally singular. Near a bridge which crosses the Loire, called "Le Pont de la belle Croix," is a stone fixed in the wall, with the remains of a defaced inscription on it. It was placed there to mark the spot where Gilles, Marechal de Retz was burnt, under the reign of Charles the seventh, and, as I think, about the year 1440. This nobleman was accused of, and condemned to die, for crimes, which were said to be too horrible and flagitious ever to be mentioned. They were.

were never divulged, but covered up in darkness and mystery. A very ingenious man, to whom I am indebted for almost all the information I have gained here, assured me that the Marechal de Retz's trial is yet preserved among the archives of the city; but that it has never been opened, from the same motives of horror and caution, which originally actuated his judges. I must confess that this whole story appears to me very extraordinary.

The environs of Nantes are agreeable; and I should be tempted to make a longer stay here, if the advanced season did not compel me to hasten my journey.—I shall set out in two hours for Rochelle. Whether I shall pursue my route to Bourdeaux, through Saintonge, or make an excursion by Poitiers and Angoulesme, I do not yet know; you shall hear of me as I proceed.

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Rochelle,

Rochelle, Wednesday, 20th Sept. 1775.

I SLEPT at Aigrefeille last Saturday night, a little village on the confines of Bretagne, and breakfasted next morning at Montague, the first town in Poictou. I continued my journey the whole day through that province, and arrived, as the sun set, at Moreille. The evening was uncommonly beautiful, and I should have proceeded some miles farther, if a very large convent, which stood opposite to the post-house, in one of the finest situations to be conceived, had not seemed to invite my attention. I ordered horses for the next morning, and walked up to look at the monastery. The great gates were open, and admitted me into a spacious court, or lawn, in front of the building. Here I met the Prior: he was a thin, spare figure, in appearance past his fiftieth year, if his dress did not tend to deceive my judgment. He accosted me with extreme politeness; and, on my informing him that I was a traveller, induced by curiosity to visit his convent, he conducted me into the church, and through the apartments. "We
" are,"

“are,” said he, “of the Cistercian order, and owe our foundation to Eleanor, queen of England, and wife to Henry the second: but during the unhappy wars of the League, the chief scene of which lay in this part of the kingdom, our archives were all carried away, and the building itself defaced, by the soldiers of Coligni.”

—When we had finished our view of it, he insisted on my company at supper. Our repast was served up with great elegance, and followed by a desert from the gardens of the priory, which were very extensive. I staid till near midnight, and left my generous host with the utmost regret.

I got to Marans, Monday morning. It is a miserable town, situate on the river Sevre, which divides Poictou from the “Pays d’Aunis.” At a small distance from the place, on the bank of the river, towards its mouth, tradition yet points out the spot rendered celebrated by the interview of Louis the eleventh of France, and his brother Charles, duke of Guyenne. The artful monarch exhausted in vain all his treacherous policy to gain his brother; and their interview, like most others

between princes, was unaccompanied with any salutary, or beneficial effect.

It is only twenty miles from Marans to Rochelle, through a rich country, covered with vines. This city, so famous in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—the refuge at that time of the Hugonots, and their grand barrier against the royal power—is still a commercial and populous place, tho' much declined from it's ancient lustre. The port, tho' it does not admit vessels of any considerable burthen, is yet well calculated for trade. It may be divided into three parts ; the bason, which is the innermost of these, is only a quarter of a mile in circumference ; and at the entrance are two very noble Gothic towers, called the “ Tour de St. Nicolas,” and the “ Tour de la Chainé.” They are now in a state of decay, but were anciently designed to protect the town and harbour. Without these towers, is the “ Avant Port,” extending more than a league, and bounded by two points of land, to the north and south. Beyond all, is the road, where the largest ships usually anchor, protected from the south-west winds by the islands of Ré, Oleron, and Aix. Previous to the cession of Canada to

to England, and of New Orleans to the crown of Spain, the trade of Rochelle was very lucrative. It has again revived within these two last years, to the coast of Guinea, and the East Indies.

This place cannot lay claim to any remote antiquity. It was only a little collection of houses on the shore, inhabited by fishermen, when William the ninth, last Count of Poictou, rendered himself master of it in 1139. From that prince it descended to his only daughter Eleanor, who, after her divorce from Louis the seventh of France, brought all her ample dowry in marriage to Henry the second of England.

Louis transgressed every rule of true policy, in suffering so great a princess to carry her possessions into the family of his vassal Henry, already too powerful. The charter of Eleanor, incorporating the town of La Rochelle, yet subsists, in the registers of the city. She granted them many peculiar privileges, which her son Richard the first afterwards confirmed. Under John, the English affairs declined; and though St. Louis, actuated by scruples of honour and conscience, restored to Henry the

third all Saintonge, and Aunis, yet his son, Philip the Bold, re-conquered them again some years after. The battle of Poitiers, under Edward the third, in 1356, was followed by the surrender of all the adjoining provinces and cities to England. Rochelle constituted part of the dominions given to the Black Prince by his father; but his reign was very short, and he lived to see them again re-united to France by Charles the fifth, in the latter years of Edward's reign.

The Reformed religion, which was first introduced into the kingdom about 1540, met with a most favourable reception here; and this city became, under Charles the ninth, the grand asylum of the Protestants. The massacre of Paris was followed soon after by the memorable siege of Rochelle, which began in November 1572, and was raised in June 1573. Enthusiasm supplied the besieged with constancy and courage, which rendered them superior to the assailants; and the Duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry the third, who commanded the royal army, was happy to find a pretext in his election to the crown of Poland, for withdrawing his shattered troops, after having lost twenty-two thousand

thousand men before the place. This success conduced towards inspiring them with resolution to withstand Louis the thirteenth, in 1627 ; but Richlieu's daring genius was not to be awed into any submission. After having precluded every source of assistance by sea and land, and having invested the place for thirteen months, it surrendered to the mercy of the king. The calamities which the garrison endured from famine, are only to be compared with those of Jerusalem under Titus, and perhaps even exceeded them. It was the last effort of religious opposition, and the era which established an unlimited royal power throughout the kingdom.

I went twice yesterday, to view the celebrated mound erected by Richlieu. When the sea retires, it is still visible ; and I walked out upon it above three hundred feet. It extends from side to side, across the whole harbour, nearly an English mile in length. Its breadth is, at this time, more than one hundred and fifty feet, and it widens continually towards the base. No effort of art or power can possibly impress the mind with so vast and sublime an idea of the genius of Richlieu, as does this bulwark against the sea. While

I stood upon it, in the middle of the port, between the waves which rolled on either side, and contemplated its extent and strength, I was almost inclined to suppose this astonishing work to be superior to human power, and the production rather of a deity than of a mortal. A small opening of about two hundred feet, was left by Pompey Targon, the architect who constructed it, to give entrance to vessels, and shut up by chains fixed across it. A tower was likewise erected at each end, no remains of which are now to be seen. Neither the duke of Buckingham, or the earl of Lindsey, who were successively sent from England to the aid of the besieged by Charles the first, dared to attack this formidable barrier; they retired, and left Rochelle to its fate. In all probability, a thousand years, aided by storms, and all the fury of the sea, will make little or no impression on this mound, which is designed to endure as long as the fame of the Cardinal, it's author.

From the northern point of the harbour, is a fine view of the three islands, Ré, Oleron, and Aix. It was on the former of these, that the duke of Buckingham landed, and, after his fruitless attempt on the citadel of St. Martin, was

was repulsed with the loss of eight thousand men. This little island, which is only six leagues in length, is separated from the main land by a channel of three miles broad. It contains, I am assured, twenty thousand inhabitants, and is better cultivated than the finest province of France; while Oleron, which is more than double its size, has not near that number of people, and is neither in the same state of cultivation or improvement. This contrast is the result of their different political immunities, the island of Ré being free, and exempt from all duties or taxation.

On the southern side of the port stands a convent of Minims, erected by Louis the thirteenth, after the siege in 1628, to pray for the souls of those who perished before La Rochelle. When Charles the ninth began to invest it in 1572, there were at that time, seventy-two thousand persons in the city. In the second siege, they had diminished to twenty-eight thousand; and at present, the inhabitants are only between seventeen and eighteen thousand; of which scarce two thousand are Hugonots.—Religious zeal and animosity have entirely subsided; the citizens are esteemed to be as well

attached to the crown as any in France; and Louis the fifteenth permitted the inscriptions engraved on copper, and affixed by Richlieu on either side the doors of the monastery I mentioned, to be taken down a few years since, solemnly broken, and thrown into the sea.——I purpose to leave Rochelle to-morrow, and shall take the road to Rochfort and Saintes.

A gentleman with whom I supped last night, assured me that the family of d'Olbreuse still exists, and that they reside near Chateaucneuf upon the Charente, in the province of Angoumois. He added, that their circumstances were narrow almost to distress. You will surely recollect, that this house is allied to the blood royal of England. George-William the last duke of Zell, married Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse, at Breda, about the middle of the last century. They had only one daughter, the beautiful and unhappy Sophia, so well known for her confinement and misfortunes, and mother to his late majesty, George the second.

The weather here is the most serene and delightful that can be imagined. The vintage is already begun round the city, and the peasants

sants are engaged in all that happy festivity natural to the season and the employment. I shall have the pleasure of seeing this scene continued to the foot of the Pyrenees, as they do not begin their vintage in Guyenne and Gascony till the middle or end of October.

This is a long, historical letter. It is time to finish it, and subscribe myself, &c. &c.

Saintes, Sunday, September 24th, 1775.

THE distance from Rochelle to Rochfort is seven leagues, the first four of which are exceedingly pleasant, the road lying along the sea-shore, and in view of the islands of Oleron and Aix, which appear at a small distance. It is now almost a century since Louis the fourteenth constructed Rochfort, and the city is built in the midst of marshes, which were expressly drained for that purpose. Colbert was then the first minister, and it is said, he used to call it "La Ville d'Or," from the prodigious sums his master had expended there. Time has however evinced the utility of the project, and the port is become as necessary and important to the crown of France, as either Brest or Toulon. It is situated on the river Charente, about five leagues from its mouth. I passed several hours, on Friday morning, in the different magazines and dock-yards. Every thing appears to be under admirable regulation, and the several branches of naval equipment are carried on with the utmost vigour and dispatch. A grand object of attention

tention with the present ministry seems to be to restore the navy, which was almost totally destroyed during the late war with England.

The number of workmen commonly employed at Rochfort, is about nine hundred, and to these are added six hundred galley slaves, who are occupied in the most painful and laborious branches of service. They are chained two and two with heavy fetters, constantly guarded, and confined in a long building erected for that purpose in the center of the yard. Some of these wretches are thus detained for a term of years; others during life. The precautions used to prevent their escape are excellent, and improved on continually by experience—yet, in spite of every obstacle, they are continually eluded.

The armoury, the rope-walks, the store-houses of every kind, are all in the best order, and kept with prodigious neatness. Louis the fourteenth fortified the city at the time he constructed it; but its situation, at so considerable a distance from the sea, renders it sufficiently secure from any attack, and they have therefore lately closed up the battlements, and neglected the fortifications. It is laid out with

great beauty and elegance. The streets are all very broad and strait, extending through the whole place from side to side; but the buildings do not correspond with them in this respect, as they are mostly low and irregular.

The province of Saintonge, of which this city is the capital, begins at a small distance from Rochfort: The antiquities which Saintes still contains, have chiefly detained me here since yesterday morning. It was a Roman colony, and these conquerors of the earth, who polished the nations they subdued, have left behind them the traces of their magnificence. In a hollow valley between two mountains, and almost adjoining to one of the suburbs, are the ruins of the amphitheatre. Tho' now in the last stage of decay, its appearance is august and venerable. In some parts, scarce any of the arches are to be seen; but the east end is still in a great degree of preservation. From its situation in a valley, and from the ruins of an aqueduct which conveyed water to the town from near three leagues distance, it has been supposed that Naumachiæ were represented in it, but this amounts only to conjecture. A triumphal

triumphal arch, on which is an inscription in Roman letters, merits likewise attention. It was erected to Germanicus, on the news of his death, so universally lamented throughout the empire.

The river Charente surrounds this city, as the Severn does that of Shrewsbury, describing the form of a horse-shoe. I have been walking in the beautiful meadows which border upon it, and from whence the buildings of the town have a fine effect. Tho' the Charente cannot compare with the Loire or the Rhone in size and depth, yet the actions which have been performed on its banks in different ages, will render it immortal in history. At Taillebourg, only six miles from hence, and nearer to its mouth, was fought the battle between Henry the third of England and St. Louis, where the latter was conqueror, and in which he gave proofs of undaunted prowess and intrepidity, by defending almost alone, the passage of a bridge against the whole English army, during some minutes. Francis the first, one of the most amiable and accomplished princes who ever reigned in France, was born in 1494, at Cognac, only seven leagues higher

higher up on the Charente. Two leagues beyond Cognac, still nearer its source, is the famous plain of Jarnac, where the Hugonots were beat in 1569 by the duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry the third; and where the great Louis, first prince of Condé was assassinated by Montesquiou. I am told that the present Count de Jarnac has caused a monument to be erected within these few years over the spot where perished that unhappy prince. I intended to have gone along the banks of the Charente, through both these last-mentioned places, to Angoulême; but the difficulties are almost insuperable, as there is no post road yet established; and I therefore pursue the strait route to Bourdeaux, through Pons and Blaye.

Except the remains of Roman grandeur yet visible at Saintes, the place contains very little to detain or amuse a traveller. It is built with great irregularity; the streets are narrow and winding, the houses mean, and almost all of them are some centuries old. The cathedral has been repeatedly defaced and destroyed by Normans and Hugonots, who made war alike on every monument of art or piety. One tower only escaped their rage,
which

which is said to have been built as early as the year eight hundred, by Charlemagne. It is of an enormous magnitude, both as to height and circumference. These circumstances have probably conduced more to its preservation during the fury of war, than any veneration for the memory of its founder, or for the sanctity of its institution.

The Reformed Religion seems far on the decline in this province, where anciently it had gained so many votaries. There is only one Protestant family, as I am assured, in Saintes: the reason is evident;—the fervours of devotion, warm and animated in the beginning, are nourished by persecution, but unhappily become languid and extinct in an age of more mild and tolerating principles. Interest is ever present, ever intimately felt by mankind. The Established Religion holds out offices and honours; Protestantism is barren: Her rewards are in another world. Can you wonder that it loses ground continually? Adieu!

Your's, &c. &c.

Bordeaux,

Bordeaux, Friday, 7th October, 1775.

I Continued my journey from Saintes last Sunday sennight, and slept at Pons, a small town agreeably situated on a mountain. Near the summit, in the centre of the place, is an ancient castle belonging to the Prince de Marfan, which commands an extensive and luxuriant prospect of the vales of Saintonge and Angoumois covered with vines, and watered by two or three fine rivulets which lose themselves, after many windings, in the Charente. I entered the province of Guyenne the next day, and arrived at Blaye, on the northern bank of the Garonne, on Tuesday morning. I put my carriage into a boat, and came up to this city by water; a distance of about seven leagues. At Blaye, the river is above four miles in breadth, but it diminishes insensibly as one approaches Bordeaux. Nearly half way between the two places, is the mouth of the river Dordogne, which after running through the Limosin and Périgord, empties itself into the Garonne. The prospect at the conflux of these two streams, is wonderfully picturesque.

picturesque. It is more cultivated and pleasing, tho' less sublime and magnificent, than that at the junction of the Vistula and the Nogat, near Marienbourg in Polish Prussia.

Our passage from Blaye was long, and the sun was setting as we turned round a point of land, which opened to us the city of Bourdeaux at the distance of three miles. The effect on the spectator is exceedingly striking. It describes the figure of a crescent more than a league in length, the buildings of which near the water-side are all modern, lofty, and very elegant. I have seen no prospect so superb in Europe, except the view of Lisbon from the tower of Belem on the river Tagus, which tho' more irregular from the nature of its situation, is perhaps superior in magnificence.

The favourable impression which Bourdeaux cannot fail to make on a stranger at his first arrival, is well confirmed by a residence in it. Pleasure seems to have as many votaries here as commerce; luxury and industry reign within the same walls, and that in the most extensive degree. The air of
courts

courts is ever effeminate, seducing, and voluptuous. Commercial cities are usually marked by opposite manners, and the love of gain, powerful in its influence over the human heart, generally obscures and absorbs the softer passions. Here, however, these rules are by no means verified. Luxury and dissipation are more openly patronized, and have made a more universal conquest, than in half the capitals of Europe. At Stockholm, scarce the shadow of them is perceivable. Neither Copenhagen nor St. Peterburgh are yet advanced to the same point of excess, tho' aided by the presence of their sovereigns, and the pleasures which naturally follow in their train. Hamburgh, tho' perhaps equal in size, possess'd of as much commerce, and as much opulence as Bourdeaux, betrays no external marks of dissolute manners, and punishes them with extreme severity. It is natural to seek for the reason of this extraordinary contrast. We shall find it, I apprehend, chiefly in the genius of the French nation, and in the spirit of the government, which rather encourages than represses luxury, among all ranks of people. Superstition, the only engine capable of opposing the torrent, has
ceased

ceased in France, where the Virgin is held in as little estimation as among us.—Divest mankind of the influence which religion, interest, and decorum have over them, what restraint can be affixed to the gratification of their passions?

The ancient city of Bourdeaux, tho' considerable in point of size, was, (what indeed every other city in Europe was at the accession of Louis the fourteenth,) ill built, badly paved, dangerous, without police or any of those municipal regulations indispensably requisite to render a city splendid or elegant. It has entirely changed its appearance within these last thirty years. The public edifices are very noble, and all the streets newly built, are regular and handsome. I am never tired of walking on the banks of the Garonne. The quays are four miles in length, and the river itself is considerably broader than the Thames at London bridge. On the opposite side, a range of hills, covered with woods, vineyards, churches and villas, extends beyond the view.

Almost in the center of the town, is a fine equestrian statue in bronze erected to the late king

king in 1743. It is very rarely that I am much affected by the inscriptions under the figures of princes, which usually contain only a detail of virtues and qualities they never possessed; but there is something in this, so pathetic, so simple, and so much addressed to the heart, that I have retained it in my memory.

“ Ludovico quindecimo,

“ Sæpe victori, semper pacificatori;

“ Suos omnes, quam late regnum patet

“ Paterno pectore gerenti;

“ Suorum in animis penitus habitanti.”

The beauty of the river Garonne, and the fertility of the adjoining country, were probably the causes which induced the Romans to lay the foundations of this city. The ruins of a very large amphitheatre yet remain, constructed under the emperor Gallienus; it is of brick, as are most of the edifices of that period, when the empire was verging to its fall, and the arts began rapidly to decline.

During the irruptions of the barbarous nations, and peculiarly in those which the Normans repeatedly made, Bourdeaux was ravaged, burnt, and almost entirely destroyed.

It only began to recover again under Henry the second of England, who, having united it to the crown by his marriage with Eleanor of Aquitaine, rebuilt it, and made it a principal object of his policy, to restore the city again to the lustre from which it had fallen.

The Black Prince received all Guyenne, Gascony, and many inferior provinces in full sovereignty from his father Edward the third; he brought his royal captive, John King of France, to this city, after the battle of Poitiers in 1356; and held his court and residence here during eleven years. His exalted character, his uninterrupted series of good fortune, his victories, his modesty, his affability, and his munificence, drew strangers to Bourdeaux from every part of Europe; but all this splendour soon disappeared. He lived to experience the ingratitude of Pedro the Cruel, to whom he had restored the kingdom of Castile; he became a prey to distempers in the vigour of life; he saw his dominions reunited again in many of their branches, to the crown of France, by Charles the fifth; he lost his eldest son, Edward, a prince of the highest expectations; and at length, overcome with for-

row

row at this last affliction, he quitted Bourdeaux, and re-embarked for England, there to expire, a memorable example of the hasty revolution of human greatness ! In 1453, Charles the seventh, king of France, re-entered the city, and subjected the whole province of Guyenne, which had been near three centuries under the English government. Conscious of the importance of such a conquest, he ordered the "Chateau Trompette" to be built to defend the passage of the river, and Louis the fourteenth afterwards employed the celebrated Vauban to erect a new fortress, in the modern style of military architecture, on the same spot.—Madame de Maintenon, whom fortune seemed to have chosen as the object of her extremest rigour, and extremest bounty, was removed from the prisons of Niort in Poictou where she was born, with her father the Baron d'Aubigné, to this castle, where she used to play with the daughter of the turnkey, in the greatest indigence.

Bourdeaux presents few remains of antiquity. The cathedral appears to be very old, and has suffered considerably from the effects
of

of time. The unfortunate duke of Guyenne, brother to Louis the eleventh, who was poisoned in 1473, lies buried before the high altar.—The adjacent country, more peculiarly the “Pays de Medoc,” which produces the finest clarets, is exceedingly pleasant; and at this season when the peasants are all engaged in the vintage, forms one of the most delicious landscapes in the world. My stay here will probably be some days longer. Meanwhile I remain, &c.

Aufsch in Armagnac,
Saturday, 14th October, 1775.

I LEFT Bourdeaux last Tuesday morning, and taking the road to Agen, along the southern bank of the Garonne. I crossed that river at Langon, a little town pleasantly situated on its banks, and stopped in the evening at La Reole. It was my intention to have proceeded farther, but the landlady was too eloquent: she offered to send her little boy who would conduct me over the ruins of the castle, while she herself prepared a brace of partridges, and the finest desert in the world, against my return. I suffered myself to be persuaded, and walked out while supper was getting ready. The sun had set, but the sky was without a cloud, and the air perfectly serene. The castle of La Reole overhangs the waters of the Garonne, and is reflected in its surface; time has crumbled many of the battlements into ruin, but enough yet remains to shew its former splendor. Catherine of Medicis resided in it some time, during one of the journies which she made into the southern provinces; and

Henry

Henry the fourth, then only king of Navarre, had here an interview with her, at which he fell in love with the beautiful Mademoiselle d'Ayelle, one of her maids of honour.

I dined the ensuing day at Aiguillon. On the hill above the town, stands the chateau of the celebrated duke d'Aiguillon, who has lived to experience the most severe reverse of fortune; and after having been the minister and the favourite of Louis the fifteenth, is now sentenced to pass the remainder of his days, an exile in his own house, deprived of power, and unaccompanied even with that compassion which often waits on illustrious persons in disgrace. He has been already here some months; happy, if the royal displeasure pursue him no farther, and if the stories of a Fouquet or a Marechal d'Ancre are not again renewed in him.

I reached Agen in the afternoon. The country through which I passed from Langon where I crossed the Garonne, to the gates of that city, is fertile beyond any I have seen in Europe. The hills are all covered with vineyards to the summit, and the vallies scarce require the industry of the peasants to produce

in plenty whatever is necessary for their subsistence. The climate at this season is delicious ; and no marks of winter appear in any of the productions of nature. Cherry trees, figs, acacias, poplars, and elms, are in full verdure ; in many places, where they border on the side of the road, the vines have run up, and mixed their clusters among the boughs : this is truly beautiful, and picturesque. Milton, in his divine flights of imagination could employ our first parents in no more delightful occupation, even in Paradise.——

“ Or they led the vine

“ To wed her elm ; she round about him throws

“ Her marriageable arms ; and with her brings

“ Her dower, th’ adopted clusters, to adorn

“ His barren leaves.”

In the midst of this charming country, in a plain, close to the Garonne, stands the city of Agen. Behind it, to the north, rises a very high hill, called “ Le Rocher de la belle Vue.” I went up to the summit, on which there is a convent. The chapel, and some of the adjoining cells are hollowed out of the rock. It is said that these apartments are
very

very ancient, and were made many centuries ago by hermits, who retired thither from motives of devotion and austerity. The prospect is beautiful, commanding over the "Condomois, Agenois, and Armagnac;" beneath, lies the city of Agen, and through the meadows which surround it, rolls the Garonne. One of the monks shewed me the apartments of the convent; and in the recesses of the rock he led me to a spring which is never dry, and which he assured me had been opened by miracle, at the intercession of some holy recluse in ages past. Their little refectory was hung with portraits of the same monastic heroes, among which was St. William duke of Aquitaine; and at the upper end, in golden letters, was written "Silentium."

Agen is a very mean and disagreeable place: the houses are ill built, the streets narrow, crooked, and dirty. I saw only one building in it, which appeared to me deserving of notice. It is a chapel belonging to a nunnery of Carmelites. The walls are exquisitely painted in Chiaro Oscuro, and the deception of the roof, which is executed in the same manner, is admirable. The high

altar is magnificent, and adorned with a piece of painting, the subject of which is very interesting. It is a nun, sinking under the transports of holy contemplation. She appears as if incapable of supporting the divine effulgence of her celestial lover, with eyes half closed, and arms expanded. Above, descends a radiant figure, with looks of tenderness and pleasure, surrounded with the glories of the skies, too strong for mortal sight. If it had not been a religious edifice, I should have supposed it to be the story of Jupiter and Semelé; to which it bears the most apt resemblance. Near the piece is this inscription.

“ Quid non conatur Amor!
 “ Cœlos in Terris adumbrare
 “ Carmeli Filizæ tentarunt,
 “ Anno salutis
 “ 1773.”

Surely, you must here be struck with the justice of a remark which we have often made together, on the intimate alliance between love and devotion, when carried to an excess. The same enthusiasm, the same melting language, the same overpowering delights, are common

common to both passions. Love, says Rousseau, in the extreme, borrows the language of Devotion ; and Devotion, in her flights, adopts the expressions of attachment and fondness.

We are used to apprehend the condition of a young woman who has taken the veil to be very miserable. Where convenience, or chagrin, or melancholy, are the motives to this act of self-dedication, I fully concur in that opinion ; but there are women, I doubt not, who in the gloom of a convent, amid shrines and crucifixes, are yet supremely happy. Married to a heavenly spouse, and dedicated to the embraces of a superior and invisible being, Enthusiasm has ample room to exert her powers, and raise her votary above the poor gratifications of earth.

“ To sounds of heavenly harps she dies away,

“ And melts in visions of eternal day.”

But I return——

Agen has anciently been fortified, and the Gothic battlements and turrets yet remain almost entire round the whole place. Margaret of Valois, daughter of Henry the second of France, and wife to Henry the fourth, so

renowned for her genius, her adventures, and her gallantries, kept her little court some time at this city, during the civil wars which desolated France, and the quarrels which subsisted between her husband and brothers.—The Agenois was part of that fine domain, which by the peace of Bretigni in 1360, was ceded to the crown of England, and constituted part of the territories governed by Edward, the Black Prince. It followed the fate of Guyenne under Charles the seventh, who re-conquered it, and for ever re-annexed it to the dominions of France.

I continued my journey from Agen on Thursday evening, and at Layrac I once more crossed the Garonne. The passage is difficult, and sometimes dangerous, the river being very rapid, and running between high banks.—I stopt a few hours yesterday morning at the city of Leytoure. As it is situated on a mountain, the sides of which are very steep, I left my carriage below, and walked up alone. Here, from the summit, I had the first view of the Pyrenees, at the distance of ninety miles; their heads lost in clouds, and covered with eternal snow.

While

While I stood gazing on these stupendous mountains, a gentleman very politely accosted me, and observing that I was a stranger, offered me his services to shew me whatever objects of curiosity the city contained.

“This place,” said he, “was a Roman colony, and called by them *Lectoura*. Many antiquities have been discovered here; and a beautiful fountain, which springs from the side of the hill near the episcopal palace, is declared by immemorial tradition to have been consecrated to Diana, who had a temple near the spot. In succeeding ages, *Leytoure* belonged to the Counts of Armagnac, who were great vassals of the crown of France, and sovereigns in their own territories. The last of these princes, John the fifth, was put to death in this city. His history was very singular. He began his reign in 1450. The youngest of his sisters, *Isabella*, was a princess of uncommon beauty and accomplishments; the Count conceived a passion for her, and, unable to repress or extinguish it, he determined, in defiance of every obstacle, to make her his wife. He

“ married her publicly; but the reigning Pope,
“ offended at so incestuous a union, de-
“ nounced against him a sentence of excom-
“ munication; and Charles the seventh, king
“ of France, prepared to enforce it by the in-
“ stant seizure of his dominions. He sent the
“ Dauphin, afterwards Louis the eleventh,
“ into Armagnac, at the head of a body of
“ forces. The Count, abandoned by his
“ subjects, and incapable of resistance, fled
“ to Fontarabia, carrying with him his be-
“ loved sister. Having, however, at the inter-
“ cession of the Count de Foix, obtained his
“ pardon, and the restoration of his possessions,
“ he returned to Leytoure, leaving the beau-
“ tiful and unhappy Isabel in Spain, where
“ she died in the utmost obscurity.—Louis the
“ eleventh, less generous and merciful than his
“ father, afterwards determined on the Count’s
“ destruction, from the desire of uniting so
“ ample a fief to the crown of France. He de-
“ clared war against John, and in 1473, an
“ army under the command of Peter de Beau-
“ jeu his son-in-law, was sent into Armagnac.
“ John the fifth retired to Leytoure, in which
“ place he was invested. He capitulated on very
“ honourable

“ honourable terms, and on the most solemn
 “ assurances of being continued in the posses-
 “ sion of his dominions.—But while the
 “ treaty was on the point of being signed,
 “ and the Count, confiding in the honour
 “ of the king, remitted his usual vigilance,
 “ the soldiers broke into the town, and he was
 “ himself murdered in his own palace. Louis
 “ immediately seized on his possessions, as
 “ escheated to the crown.”

I listened to this affecting story with great
 attention. When the gentleman had con-
 cluded it, he conducted me to the brow of
 the mountain, where are still the remains of
 a castle. “ In this fortress,” said he (renew-
 ing his discourse) “ the noble and unfortu-
 “ nate Marechal de Montmorenci, (grandson
 “ to the famous constable of France of the
 “ same name,) was confined, after the battle
 “ of Castelnaudari, in 1632. So amiable
 “ was his character, so general was the at-
 “ tachment borne to him, and so detested
 “ was the Cardinal de Richlieu his enemy,
 “ that the ladies of the place attempted by a
 “ stratagem to procure him his liberty. They
 “ sent him, as a present, a large pye, in
 E 6 “ which

“ which was concealed a filken ladder of ropes.
“ He lost no time in endeavouring to avail
“ himself of this instrument for his escape,
“ and having fixed it the same evening, to the
“ window of his apartment, he ordered his
“ valet to descend first, with intent to follow
“ him ; but the servant having unfortunately
“ missed his hold, fell, and in the fall broke
“ his thigh. The centinels, alarmed at his
“ cries, ran to the spot, and intercepted the
“ Marechal, who was soon after conducted to
“ Toulouse, and there put to death.”

My polite conductor quitted me, and I continued my walk alone. Leytoure occupies a level space of more than half a mile in circumference, on the summit of a mountain. The fortifications in many parts are yet entire, and the situation, admirably calculated for defence, was probably the motive which induced the Romans there to construct a city.

I left Leytoure at noon, and arrived here last night, the distance being only five-and-twenty miles. This place is the capital of Armagnac, and like Leytoure, it lies on the summit and declivity of a very steep hill, which is surrounded by other hills that rise

at a small distance. Through the vale below runs a rivulet, called the Gers. The inhabitants of Auch are about six thousand, the buildings modern and elegant; the streets, tho' in general narrow, yet are clean, and well paved. In the center of the city stands the cathedral, which is one of the most magnificent in France, both as to its construction, and the internal decorations. The painted windows are only inferior to those of Gouda in Holland. The chapels are of equal beauty, and ornamented at a prodigious expence.

The revenues of the see of Auch, which is archiepiscopal, amount annually to three hundred thousand livres. The palace corresponds with these ample possessions, and is a very handsome building. The apartments are furnished with a voluptuous splendour, rather becoming a temporal than a spiritual prince; and in the chamber where the archbishop himself sleeps, I could not help smiling at a number of holy relics, which he has disposed round a bed, on which Heliogabalus might have reposed. The library is very ample, and adorned with some portraits. Among these, a fine head of the Cardinal de Polignac, who
was

was archbishop of Auch, drew my attention. There is infinite genius marked in the countenance. A pale face ; the contour, oval ; an aquiline nose, and an eye looking forward into futurity. Over his scarlet robe hangs the cross of the Holy Ghost, on his breast. He was one of the many sublime spirits who will for ever immortalize the age of Louis the fourteenth.

The country through which I have passed to the south of the Garonne, is much more hilly, or rather mountainous, than that on the northern side of the river. It is not, however, less fertile or agreeable. Tho' I am assured that every article of life is more than doubled in price within these last ten years, yet this province is still accounted one of the cheapest in the kingdom. The common wine of Armagnac is at present only five farthings a bottle : hares, partridges, and every kind of game, are found in vast abundance. Add to these advantages, a happy climate, and a people polite and gay from natural disposition, and you will allow that a man must be very splenetic, who would die here of ennui.

To-morrow I continue my journey to Tarbes, and Pau in Bearn.

Orthez

Orthez in Bearn,

Saturday, 21st October, 1775.

ARMAGNAC is a hilly and romantic country, abounding in beautiful prospects, where rudeness and cultivation are finely blended. At Rabastens, a little town, I entered the province of Bigorre, and got the same evening to Tarbes, which is the capital. My intention was to have visited Barege, so famous for its medicinal baths; but its situation in the midst of the Pyrenees, where the winter has already begun, and which are covered at this time with snow, has induced me to relinquish my design. I stayed a day at Bagneres de Bigorre, a place hardly less celebrated than Barege. It is only about twelve miles distant from Tarbes, and the road lies through a rich vale, at the end of which, immediately under the Pyrenean mountains, stands the town. It has been crowded with company during the summer, who are now forsaking it. Nothing can exceed the environs of Bagneres in beauty. Even at this advanced season, when nature is

on her decline, and the leaves begin to take the hue of autumn, the country yet retains a thousand charms. The Pyrenees, which rise above the town, and whose craggy summits are lost in clouds, form an object the most magnificent that can be imagined; while on the other side appear fertile vallies covered with vines, and interspersed with hamlets. There are many springs near Bagneres, both warm and cold, which issue out of the mountains, and are of different virtues. Those called "Les bains de salut," are the principal; they are about half a mile from the town, and the walk to them, between the hills, is equally agreeable and romantic.

I cannot help regretting that the year is too far advanced to permit me to pass some weeks among the Pyrenees. An admirer of nature must find ample subject for reflection, and the greatest sources of entertainment amidst the extraordinary scenes which present themselves in this chain of rocks, stretching from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. They seem as if designed to form a barrier between France and Spain, which no union of blood or policy can ever effectually surmount.

not

notwithstanding the celebrated words of Louis the fourteenth to his grandson Philip, when ready to set out for Madrid—"Mon fils, il n'y a plus des Pyrenees."

I left Tarbes on Wednesday last, and got to Pau in six hours, the distance not exceeding thirty miles. The province of Bearn begins about a league from Tarbes, at the ascent of a very steep and lofty mountain, which divides it from Bigorre. The city of Pau will be for ever memorable in history, since it was the birth-place of Henry the fourth. That immortal prince was born in the castle, then the usual residence of the kings of Navarre. You will not doubt that I visited it with equal pleasure and attention. It stands on one of the most romantic and singular spots I have ever seen, at the west end of the town, upon the brow of a rock which terminates perpendicularly. Below, runs the Gave, a river, or rather a torrent, which rises in the Pyrenees, and empties itself into the Adour. On the other side, about two miles off, is a ridge of hills, covered with vineyards, which produce the famous "Vin de Jorençon," so much admired; and beyond all, at the distance

distance of nine leagues, appear the Pyrenees themselves, covering the horizon from east to west, and bounding the prospect. The castle, tho' now in a state of decay, is still habitable; and the apartments are hung with tapestry, said to be the work of Jane queen of Navarre, and mother of Henry the fourth. Gaston the fourth, Count de Foix, who married Leonora, heiress of the crown of Navarre, began the edifice in 1464; but his successor, Henry d'Albret completed and enlarged it, about the year 1519, when he made choice of the city of Pau for his residence, and where, during the remainder of his reign, he held his little court.

In a chamber, which by its size was formerly a room of state, is a fine whole length portrait of that Jane, Queen of Navarre, whom I have just mentioned. Her dress is very splendid, and resembles those in which our Elizabeth is usually painted. Her head-dress is adorned with pearls; round her neck she wears a ruff; and her arms, which are likewise covered with pearls, are concealed by her habit, quite down to the wrist. At her waist hangs by a chain a miniature portrait.

trait. The fingers of her right hand play on the strings of a guittar; and in her left she holds an embroidered handkerchief. The painter has drawn her as young, yet not in the first bloom of youth. Her features are regular, her countenance thin, but rather inclining to long; the eyes hazel, and the eye-brows finely arched. Her nose is well formed, tho' large, and her mouth pretty. She was a great princess, of high spirit, and undaunted magnanimity. Her memory is not revered by the French historians, because she was the protectress of the Hugonots, and the friend of Colligni; but the actions of her life evince her distinguished merit.

In one of the adjoining chambers, is another portrait of Henry the fourth himself, when a boy; and on the second floor is the apartment in which he was born. The particulars of his birth are in themselves so curious, and as relating to so great and good a prince, are so peculiarly interesting, that I doubt not you will forgive my enumerating them, even tho' you should have seen them elsewhere.—His mother Jane had already lost two sons, the duke de Beaumont, and the count de Marle.

Marle. Henry d'Albret, her father, anxious to see an heir to his dominions, enjoined her, (when she accompanied her husband Anthony of Bourbon to the wars of Picardy, against the Spaniards), if she proved with child, to return to Pau, and to lie-in there, as he would himself superintend the education of the infant, from the moment of its birth. He threatened to disinherit her, if she failed to comply with this injunction. The princess, in obedience to the king's command, being in the ninth month of her pregnancy, quitted Compiègne in the end of November, traversed all France in fifteen days, and arrived at Pau, where she was delivered of a son on the thirteenth December, 1553. She had always been desirous to see her father's will, which he kept in a golden box; and he promised to shew it to her, provided she admitted of his being present at her delivery, and would, during the pains of her labour, sing a song in the Bearnois language. Jane had courage enough to perform this unusual request; and the king being called on the first news of her illness, she immediately sung a Bearnois song, beginning, " Notre Dame du bout du pont, aidez moi
" en

"en cette heure."—As she finished it, Henry was born. The king instantly performed his promise, by giving her the box, together with a golden chain, which he tyed about her neck; and taking the infant into his own apartment, began by making him swallow some drops of wine, and rubbing his lips with a root of garlic. The manner of his being brought up was similar, and in a prince almost unexampled. He was sent to the castle of Coarace in Bearn, where, without any regard to his quality, he used to run about with the children of the neighbouring peasants, barefooted and bareheaded, even in the rigours of winter. This severe education formed his body to fatigue and hardship, for the exercise of which he had no little occasion during his future life, in the long wars with Henry the third, and the duke of Mayenne. They still shew a tortoise shell which served him for a cradle, and is preserved on that account.

Several of the ancient sovereigns of Navarre resided and died in the castle of Pau. Francois Phoebus, who ascended the throne in 1479, died here in 1483. He was only sixteen years of age, his mother being regent.

The

The young king, who was very fond of music, having taken up a flute, had no sooner applied it to his mouth, than he felt himself affected with poison, and that in so violent a manner, that he expired in two hours. This murder was attributed to Ferdinand king of Arragon, a man whose character justified the worst suspicions, and who soon after seized on the kingdom. Catherine de Foix succeeded her brother Francois Phoebus. She married John d'Albret, and was the last real queen of Navarre, little more than an empty title having remained to her successors. She died of grief for the loss of her dominions, which was chiefly caused by the incapacity and cowardice of her husband. Her reproach to him was very poignant: "Dom Jean," said she, "si nous fussions nés, vous Catherine de Foix, et moi Dom Jean d'Albret, nous n'aurions jamais perdu la Navarre!"

Pau is a handsome city, well built, and contains near six thousand inhabitants. It is a modern place, having owed its existence entirely to the castle, and to the residence of the kings of Navarre.

I pursued

I pursued my journey this morning. The country from Pau to Orthez is mostly level, finely cultivated, and covered with vines. The peasants speak a jargon unintelligible even to the French. Their dress too differs very much from that worn in Guyenne, and both their dress and their complexions bear a resemblance to the Spanish.—This place is a city and bishopric, but the meanest, I believe, in France. The cathedral is a wretched edifice, very ancient, built in a barbarous style, and almost in ruins. I expected to have found in it some monuments of the kings of Navarre, but have been disappointed. The remains of the castle of Orthez are very noble; and its situation is fine, on a hill which commands the town, and a great extent of country. The people call it “Le Chateau de la Reine Jeanne,” because that queen resided in it during many years, in preference to the castle of Pau. Some of the apartments, tho’ in ruins, may yet be entered. The princess Blanche, daughter to John king of Arragon and Navarre, was shut up, and died here, in 1464. Her brother being dead, she became heiress to the crown of Navarre; but her
father

father having delivered her into the hands of her younger sister Leonora, countess of Foix, she confined the unhappy Blanche in the castle of Orthez, and after an imprisonment of two years, caused her to be poisoned.

History, from its earliest commencement to the present century, presents a frightful picture of massacres and crimes, at which humanity recoils. We find ambition and subtlety too often triumphant, while innocence and the most amiable qualities, unless accompanied with vigour and capacity, frequently conduct their unfortunate possessors to violent or ignominious ends.—But I have done with reflections. It is late, and I set out to-morrow for Bayonne. Probably from thence, I may send you the conclusion of this letter.

Bayonne,

Bayonne, Wednesday, 25th October, 1775.

I Continued my journey last Sunday morning. The province of Bearn is a fertile country, abounding in fine acclivities, and well cultivated.

I arrived at this city in the afternoon. Its situation is one of the most agreeable in France, at the conflux of two rivers, the Nive and the Adour. The latter is scarce less considerable than the Thames at Lambeth, and across it is a wooden bridge, which joins Bayonne to a suburb called "Le Faux-bourg du St. Esprit." The Nive, which is small, and rises in the Pyrenees, passes through the centre of the city, and resembles one of the canals in Holland. Advantageous as this situation appears for commerce, yet the trade of Bayonne is not only inconsiderable, but yearly diminishes. The entrance of the Adour, which is about four miles below the town, is rendered both difficult and hazardous from the sands which have collected, and which form a bar across its mouth. Besides this

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inconvenience, the neighbourhood of Bourdeaux draws to that city most of those articles of trade which were formerly exported from hence ; and so rapidly have both the commerce and population of this place declined, that the former is reduced to the shadow of what it once was, and the number of inhabitants has decreased within these last twelve years from twenty-one thousand to less than ten thousand. Bayonne is, notwithstanding these circumstances, a very agreeable place of residence, and furnishes in profusion all the requisites for human life, Wild fowl is in prodigious plenty, and the flavour exceedingly delicate. The Bay of Biscay, and the river Adour supply excellent fish. The “ Vin de Cap Breton,” and the “ Vin d’Anglet,” which are made in the adjacent country, infinitely exceed the miserable claret drank in this part of the kingdom, and are sold at eight sous a bottle. The town is surrounded with woods, which render fuel one of the cheapest articles, and the climate itself is delicious, tho’ the vicinity of the Pyrenean mountains very much increases the cold in winter.

The

The buildings of the city are in general very old, and some of the streets, like those of Rochelle, have porticoes on either side; but the "Place de Grammont" on the bank of the Adour, is adorned with very elegant modern houses and public edifices. On an eminence in the midst of the town stands the cathedral. I could gain no other intelligence from the inhabitants respecting it, except that the English constructed it during the time that they were masters of Bayonne and Gascony. It is a venerable pile, and, to judge from the style and ornaments of the various parts, it must have been built as early as the year 1350. I have made several visits to it, in hopes of discovering some tombs or monuments of antiquity: but there is not any thing deserving attention, except the relics of St. Leo, who was put to death here in 907, and whose bones are preserved in a splendid shrine over the high altar.

Bayonne, tho' considered as a frontier city of France, is very ill fortified, the ramparts and fosses being equally neglected. On the north side of the Adour, Louis the fourteenth caused a citadel to be constructed by Vauban, on

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a hill

a hill which commands the town, and in which there is always a garrison of about a thousand soldiers. Till the year 1193, this place, and a considerable territory round it, was governed by its own Viscounts. The English rendered themselves masters of it at that time, under the reign of Richard the first, and kept possession of it till 1451, when Charles the seventh's victorious arms annexed it to the crown of France. It has never been retaken since, tho' Philip the third and fourth of Spain made, each of them, an attempt for that purpose. The common people are called, from the name of the province in which Bayonne is situated, "Basques." Their dress is peculiar to themselves. The women comb up their hair on the crown of their heads, and cover it with a sort of cap exactly resembling a little turban, which has no inelegant effect. The complexions of both sexes are considerably darker than in Guyenne, and they speak a jargon called the Basque, which has scarce any affinity either with the French, Spanish, or even the Gascon dialect.

I had

I had some intention, before I arrived here, of visiting Pampelona, capital of the Spanish Navarre; but the advanced season, the Pyrenean mountains which it is very difficult to pass even in the smallest two-wheeled carriage, and above all the mortality among the cattle, which has continued a considerable time in this and the adjoining provinces, are such insuperable obstacles as compel me to relinquish my design.

At this city my journey to the southward ends, and to-morrow I shall set out for Toulouse. I am under a necessity of taking the same route by which I came, as far as Auch, there being no other post-road in this part of France. I shall write as I proceed.

Toulouse, 8th November, 1775.

THE country from Bayonne to the passage over the river Adour, is heathy, woody, and barren, neither well peopled nor cultivated, in comparison with the greater part of the provinces of Bearn, and Bigorre. I got to Orthez in the evening. The sun had set, but after the finest day imaginable : I walked out, and having a curiosity to look once more at the ruins of the castle, I ascended the hill on which it stands, and stayed a few minutes within the walls. The gloom of night began already to shade the chambers, and spread an awful melancholy through the whole edifice. As I passed out of the great gate-way into the road on my return to the inn, an old peasant met me, and with great simplicity assured me, that it was already past the hour when the inhabitants ventured into the castle, because the apparition of a princess who had been murdered in it, walked at night ; and that he himself when young, had seen and heard things very unusual, and very terrifying,

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in the great tower. This tradition of a murdered princess is certainly that of the unfortunate Blanche of Navarre, whom I have already mentioned; and was one of those catastrophes which naturally give birth, among the credulous and superstitious multitude, to tales of spectres, and their train of horrors.

I dined at Pau, and passed some time in the "Parc d'Henri quatre." This is a beautiful wood, overhanging the Gave, and terminating at a point, from whence is an extensive and romantic prospect. As Henry, while he held his court in Bearn, was fond of this grove, it has retained his name.

I stayed four days at Tarbes on my return. The town stands in the midst of a finely cultivated plain, but contains very few objects of entertainment or instruction.

Francis the first, at the marriage of his sister Margaret of Valois with Henry d'Albret, King of Navarre, gave her the provinces of Armagnac and Bigorre as a dowry; and that celebrated princess, so well known for her genius and her writings, died at the "Chateau d'Odos," only a league from Tarbes, in 1549.

I crossed all Armagnac to this city, and arrived here on the third of November. Toulouse is the most disagreeable and ill built place I have seen in France. It is a vast labyrinth, composed of streets so crooked, narrow and winding, that it requires a clue to conduct a stranger through them. No squares, or public places, adorned with elegant buildings, as at Nantes or Bourdeaux, tho' it equals this last city in size. I almost accuse myself for having remained six days in a place which presents scarce any interesting object to the eye or understanding, and where the imagination cannot even receive that pleasing sensation which results from visiting the spot where great actions have been performed in past ages. The annals of Toulouse are marked with little except acts of cruelty or superstition; the death of a Montmorenci, or the execution of a Calas.

The cathedral is by no means a splendid pile of architecture. It was erected by Raymond the sixth, about the year 1200. You will recollect that Languedoc was governed during several centuries by counts. Jane, the daughter and heiress of Raymond the seventh,

seventh, was married to Alfonso brother of St. Louis; and by the deaths of that prince and princess without issue, who expired within a few days of each other at Savona in Italy, immediately after St. Louis's unfortunate crusade and siege of Tunis, the county of Toulouse was united to the crown of France in 1271.

The tomb of Pibrac, whose name is so often mentioned under the reign of Henry the third, is in the church of the "grands Augustins." This grave magistrate fell violently in love with the second Margaret of Valois queen of Navarre, and wife of Henry the fourth, and sacrificed, as history declares, at the treaty of Nerac, his public duties to his attachment for that princess. In a history of this city, which I procured on my arrival, a curious anecdote occurs relating to Margaret herself.—Catherine of Medicis, says the author, after the conference of Nerac, retired to Toulouse, carrying with her the queen of Navarre, who was tired of her husband, and chagrined at his amours. The court, despairing of the pregnancy of Louisa, queen of France, who had been married five years to Henry the third, was

very anxious that Margaret might have children. Catherine, her mother, who was ever addicted to astrology, having heard that there resided at Castelnaudari, a woman famous for her skill in telling fortunes and prying into futurity, went thither with her daughter to consult this “*Diseure de bonne aventure.*”

The princess was submitted in a state of nudity to the old woman’s inspection, who examined all the parts of her person with extreme accuracy. She then returned this plain answer to the queen, with certain medicines which she had composed. “*Madame, votre fille est d’une très-bonne constitution, et je me promets un bon succès de mon remede, pourvu qu’elle puisse gagner sur elle de se tenir chaste tout le tems qui est marqué dans le regime; car j’apprends que vous êtes mere et fille de grandes coureuses.*” It is most probable that Margaret, whose constitution was of a very amorous kind, found too great difficulty in submitting to a prescription, which deprived her of those pleasures to which she was immoderately attached, nor could the person consulted have found out any better means of preserving

preserving her own credit, than by laying her royal patient under an injunction, which the knowledge she had of her character and complexion, rendered it very certain she would infringe.

Toulouse has some inland commerce by means of the famous canal cut to join the two seas, which opens into the Garonne just above the city, and conveys all the articles of trade from Cette to Bourdeaux, across the provinces of Languedoc and Guyenne. This communication is however of little advantage to the place, which owes its chief gaiety to the parliament, and to the provincial nobility who reside here in winter. I leave it this afternoon, and am meanwhile,

Yours, &c.

Beziers, Monday, 13th November, 1775.

I Quitted Toulouse last Thursday, and slept at Castelnau-d'Aud, which is near forty miles distant ; it is a tolerable town, and situated on the " Royal Canal," made by Louis the fourteenth, to join the Mediterranean and Atlantic seas. The Saracens who conquered this part of France during the decay of the Roman empire, are said to have been its founders. In a valley about half a mile from the place, is the spot where the unfortunate duke of Montmorenci, cover'd with wounds, and thrown from his horse, was taken prisoner, in
 † 1632. I lamented as I stood over it, the fate of so heroic and so amiable a prince. He was the Ruffel of France, who fell a sacrifice to the stern and unrelenting policy of the Cardinal de Richlieu. The grandson of that constable Montmorenci, who expired in arms for the defence of the monarchy, under Charles the ninth, at seventy-seven years of age ; son to Henry d'Amville, Constable of France under Henry the fourth ; he himself of a character the most elevated, munificent, and benevolent ; less

† Il gagna la bataille de Montmorency le 30. Juin 1632. Il fut pris prisonnier & conduit à Paris. Il fut condamné à mort le 30. Dec. 1632. Il fut décapité le 30. Dec. 1632. Il fut enterré à Saint-Denis le 31. Dec. 1632. Il fut déclaré criminel de lèse-majesté en Juillet 1632. Il fut pris prisonnier à Castelnau-d'Aud le 13. Nov. 1632. Il fut conduit à Paris le 14. Nov. 1632. Il fut condamné à mort le 30. Dec. 1632. Il fut décapité le 30. Dec. 1632. Il fut enterré à Saint-Denis le 31. Dec. 1632.

guilty, even in his opposition to Louis the thirteenth, than was Gaston duke of Orleans; and, tho' an enemy of the minister, yet guiltless of rebellion against his sovereign.—How many circumstances to extenuate his crime! I have ever considered this execution as one of those which tarnish in the highest degree the great name of Richlieu, and, amid all the splendor of his public actions, force us to abhor the man.

It is about five-and-twenty miles from Castelnaudari to Carcassonne, where I staid the remainder of the ensuing day. Carcassonne consists of two distinct cities, separated by the little river Aude. The most ancient of these, called “La Haute Ville,” stands on the summit of a hill; the lower town, which is in the plain, is the largest, and both are surrounded with Gothic walls, battlements and turrets, which are in the most perfect preservation. This place bore a considerable share in that celebrated crusade undertaken against the Albigenes in the beginning of the thirteenth century, and which forms one of the most

atrocious

Le Sieur de Montmorency, d'origine noble, fut condamné à mort par le Parlement de Paris, le 10. d'Oct. 1632. pour s'être révolté contre le Roy. Son corps fut pendu à la guillotine, et sa tête fut mise sur un piquet. (Journal de Trévoux, 17. p. 210. 212. 215.)

atrocious barbarity to be found in the annals of the world.

When the royal power was nearly annihilated, during the reigns of the last kings of the Carlovingian race in France, most of the cities of Languedoc erected themselves into little independent states, governed by their own princes. Carcassonne was then under the dominion of Viscounts. At the time when pope Innocent the third patronized and commanded the prosecution of hostilities against the Albigenes for the crime of heresy, Raymond the reigning Viscount was included in that proscription. Simon de Montfort, general of the army of the church, invested the city of Carcassonne in 1209. The inhabitants, terrified at the fate of several other places where the most dreadful massacres had been committed, demanded leave to capitulate; but this act of mercy was only extended to them under a condition, equally cruel, incredible, and unparalleled in history, if we were not compelled to believe it by the unanimous testimony of all the contemporary writers. The people found in the place, were all obliged, without distinction of rank or sex, to evacuate
it

it in a state of nudity; and Agnes the Viscountess, was not exempted, tho' young and beautiful, from this ignominious and shocking punishment. " On les fit fortir tout nuds
 " de la Ville de Carcassonne (says an ancient
 " author) afin qu'ils receussent de la honte, en
 " montrant ces parties du corps que la pureté
 " de la langue n'exprime point, desquelles
 " ils avoient abusé, et s'en étoient servis dans
 " des crimes execrables." It seems by this imputation, that the Albigeois were accused by their enemies of some enormities, probably unjust, and similar to those which religious enmity and prejudice have attributed to the followers of Zinzendorf in the present century.

I continued my journey on Saturday to Narbonne; the country from Toulouse to the gates of that city is very unpleasant; it is a vast plain, open, naked, and in many parts barren, where scarce a tree is to be seen except olives, and even those are neither large nor numerous. On one hand appear the Pyrenees at a considerable distance; and on the other, the chain of rocks, called the Black Mountains, which divide Languedoc from the province

province of Rouergue. The weather was cold, and I found it difficult to procure a miserable fire made of vine twigs, and roots of olives. The population is very thin, and the appearance of the country bleak and inhospitable. I went about a league out of the road near Carcassonne, to a little town called Treb , where the "Royal Canal" passes over the river Aude, and arriv'd at Narbonne in the afternoon.

I must own that I was infinitely disappointed in that city, which retains scarce any marks of its ancient grandeur. Narbonne, which pretends to the most remote antiquity under the Celtic kings, in ages anterior even to the Roman conquests; which under these latter masters, gave its name to all the "Gallia Narbonensis," and was a colony of the first consideration, is now dwindled to a wretched, solitary town, containing scarce eight thousand inhabitants, of whom three fourths are priests and women. The streets and buildings are mean and ruinous; it has indeed, a communication with the Mediterranean, from which Narbonne is only about three leagues distant, by means of a small river which intersects the
place;

place ; but their commerce is very limited, and chiefly consists in grain which they export to Cette and Marseilles. No marks of Roman magnificence remain, except several inscriptions in different parts of the city ; and if the churches did not keep employed some hundred ecclesiastics, who are occupied in the beneficial duties of chanting requiems and vespers, it would probably cease in a few years to have any existence whatever.

The See of Narbonne, which is archiepiscopal, is said to have been founded by Charlemagne, but the present cathedral is far more modern, tho' only the choir of it remains, which is built in the finest style of the Gothic edifices. In the center of the church, before the high altar, is the tomb of Philip the Bold, king of France, son of St. Louis. It is composed of white marble, and the king is represented lying at full length, his head reposing on a cushion ornamented with fleurs de lis. His face is that of a man in the prime of life, the features regular and pleasing ; he has a beard on the upper lip and chin, and his hair falls in great quantity on his neck. In his right hand is the Dalmatique, resembling a pastoral staff ; and in the
left

left he holds a sceptre, and a hand of justice. He has a crown on his head, and his feet rest on a lion. Behind, in the old black letter, is this inscription.

“ Sepultura bonæ Memoriz
 “ Philippi,
 “ quondam Francorum Regis,
 “ Filii beati Ludovici,
 “ qui Perpignani calida Febre
 “ ab hac Luce migravit,
 “ 3 Non : Octobris,
 “ Anno Dni 1285.”

You may perhaps recollect that Philip died at forty-five years of age, on his return from an ill concerted and unfortunate expedition against the king of Arragon. The body was brought here from Perpignan, and the bones having been separated by boiling water from the flesh, they were carried to St. Denis and there interred.

The distance from Narbonne to this city is twenty miles. The mountain of Malpas, which was cut through, to admit the passage of the “ Royal Canal,” lies only a mile out of the road. It was impossible to pass so extraordinary and celebrated a work without
 visiting

visiting it. The effect produced by it on the spectator is very striking, and sublime. I descended by a large flight of steps into the excavation, and walked through the mountain along the side of the canal. The length of it is exactly two hundred and ten paces, or more than six hundred feet; and the perpendicular height from the water to the surface of the incumbent mountain is two hundred and two feet. A great part of the arch has been vaulted at a prodigious expence, from the dread of its falling in from the weight above; and the annual necessary repairs amount to a large sum of money. The breadth of the canal itself is at least twenty feet; and tho' the distance hollowed through the ground is so considerable, yet the light is every where perfectly admitted. This was the greatest obstacle to completing the junction of the two seas, and its execution has immortalized the famous Riquet, whom Louis the fourteenth employed in the enterprize. He was made Count de Caraman, and his descendants yet enjoy the title.

I arrived here last night. Beziers is an opulent and considerable city, containing above
twenty

twenty thousand inhabitants, and situated in a delicious country. It occupies all the sides of a very steep and lofty hill, on the highest point of which is built the cathedral. At the foot runs the river Orbe. The prospect is extensive and beautiful, bounded to the north by mountains, and terminated on the south by the Mediterranean. It is esteemed one of the most plentiful and eligible places of residence in the kingdom, all the necessaries and elegancies of life being procured here at the most moderate prices.

Beziers is said to have been a "Statio Romana," and was used by them as a place of arms. The siege which happened during the crusade against the Albigenes, was one of the most memorable and bloody which distinguished that flagitious war. The garrison defended it with determined bravery; and every other means having failed in the attempt for its reduction on the part of the besiegers, a resolution was taken to storm the city. The papal Nuncio, assisted by Gusman the Spaniard who is better known in ecclesiastical history under the name of St. Dominic, exhorted the troops to behave with
courage

courage in this pious enterprize, and promised them remission from all their past offences. After a long and obstinate struggle, Beziers was entered by the victorious soldiery, who massacred in cold blood, sixty thousand of the wretched inhabitants, without distinction of sex, rank, or age, and afterwards reduced the city to ashes. I leave to your own mind to make the natural reflections on this horrid catastrophe. I do not permit myself to comment on such an event, to which there are but too many similar in the history of the Romish church. That religion has doubtless ever been unfavorable and unpropitious to the happiness of the human race, which nourishes in its essence the seeds of theological controversy, and metaphysical subtilties; disputes, which however contemptible in themselves, necessarily produce that spirit of intolerance and persecution, which uniform experience proves to be the certain consequence in modern ages, of a difference in opinion on sacred subjects. Happy the Romans and the Greeks, who established no crusades to convert the provinces which they subdued! who massacred no people for their adherence to the
superstition

superstition of their ancestors, who knew no points of scholastic or polemical divinity ; but who with open arms received the gods of the conquered nations, and admitted Isis and the dog Anubis, to a place in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus !

Edward the Black Prince laid siege to Beziers in 1355, but without success. He ravaged all this part of Languedoc, and advanced even as far as Fabrignes, a little town only two leagues distant from Montpellier. There he halted ; and whether from an apprehension of being intercepted in his retreat, or that his army was satiated with booty, began his march back into Guienne. He burnt the suburbs of Narbonne and Carcassonne in his way, spread terror through all the neighbouring provinces, and conducted his soldiers in triumph to Bourdeaux, laden with spoils.

The cathedral of Beziers contains nothing remarkable, except the tomb of the Princess Blanche of France. Philip of Valois her father, at the age of fifty-six, fell in love with Blanche d'Evreux, the most beautiful princess in Europe. She was only sixteen

years old ; but this disproportion in their ages did not prevent the nuptials. The King enjoyed his bride a very short time ; and died the ensuing year, of the same disease which proved fatal to Louis the twelfth, king of France, and to Don John, son to Ferdinand and Isabel of Spain. The queen was left with child, and brought into the world some months afterwards the princess Blanche, who when she had attained her twentieth year, was betrothed to the Count of Barcelona, but died at this city, on her journey into Catalonia.

I leave Beziers this afternoon. Meanwhile, adieu !

Tarascon on the Rhone,
Tuesday, 21st November, 1775.

MONTPELIER is a delightful place of residence. I staid there four days, and left it with excessive regret. The town itself is by no means beautiful, the streets being almost all narrow, winding, and badly laid out; but Nature seems to have chosen the hill on which it stands, to enrich with her choicest favours. The ascent is easy and gradual on every side; and the states of Languedoc have ornamented the summit of it at a vast expence, in a manner where taste and magnificence are equally blended.

The prospect from this happy spot I cannot describe, though I studied it every day with an enthusiastic pleasure. Raphael's pencil, or that of Lorraine might paint it, but not even Shakespeare's powers of description could do justice to its beauties. The vales of Languedoc, covered with olives, or laid out in vineyards, are finely contrasted with rude rocks to the north, and melt away into the sea to the south. Tho' winter has almost stripped the trees of their verdure, there is
nothing

nothing melancholy or desart which presents itself to the eye. A sky serene and unclouded, an invigorating sun, a keen and wholesome air spread a gaiety over November itself, which here is neither accompanied with fogs or rain. Montpellier has notwithstanding lost, within these last thirty years, that reputation for salubrity which conduces more to the support of a place, than any real advantages it may possess; and the number of strangers who visit it from motives of health diminishes annually. Some trade is still carried on from thence by a small river called the Les, which empties itself into the sea at the distance of a league; but the Mediterranean has been retiring these three centuries from the whole coast of Languedoc and Provence. Fréjus, which is situated between Toulon and Antibes, where the emperor Augustus laid up his galleys after the battle of Actium, is now become an inland city.

You doubtless remember in history the celebrated interview of Charles the fifth and Francis the first at Aigues-mortes, in 1535. That place is at present half a league from the shore, and has consequently lost all its

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ancient commerce, which was very extensive. This event, which took place early in the last century, induced the Cardinal de Richlieu, who was ever attentive to the grandeur and emolument of the state, to construct a port at Agde, which he effected. The remedy was only temporary, as the cause still subsisted; and before the year 1670, the harbour of Agde by the retreat of the sea, was rendered almost useless. Colbert then undertook to build the town of Cette, from which place all the commodities brought down the "Royal Canal" might be exported, and the province of Languedoc be supplied with a port, of which otherwise it is totally destitute. I am assured, that the absolute necessity of having a maritime town at the mouth of the canal has alone hitherto prevented Cette from sharing the fate of Agde, as the annual expence of clearing the harbour amounts to a hundred thousand livres; and even these precautions cannot hinder the sand from obstructing the entrance, and forming a bar across it in a series of years. Montpellier owed its elevation chiefly to this very circumstance, as the episcopal see was originally at Maguelonne, a town on the shore
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of the Mediterranean; but that place declining, from the retreat of the sea, Pope Paul the third transferred it thither in 1536.

The country from Montpellier to Nîmes, is a garden, level, and every where cultivated. The peasants are just beginning to gather the olives, which are very numerous, and the trees are planted with the same regularity as our orchards in England. I cannot but envy the inhabitants this genial climate and these fertile plains, and am ready to accuse Nature of partiality in the infinite difference which she has placed between the peasant of Languedoc and of Sweden. In vain will you tell me that the *Amor Patriæ*, the attachment we naturally bear to that country where we were born, renders them equally happy, and extinguishes all other distinctions. I know the force of this principle; I feel and cultivate it with the greatest ardour—but it cannot blind me to the infinite superiority with which certain countries of the earth are endowed, above other less favoured latitudes and regions.

I passed three days at Nîmes in the survey of those magnificent and beautiful remains of Roman greatness which yet subsist there.

They have been described a thousand times, and it is not my intention to fatigue you with a repetition of them. The Amphitheatre, and the "maison quarrée," are known throughout every kingdom of Europe. The first of these impresses the beholder with the deepest veneration ; the latter excites the most elegant and refined delight. Indignation against the barbarians who could violate and deface these glorious monuments of antiquity, will mix with the sensations of every spectator. One can scarce believe that Charles Martel, from hatred to the Roman name, had the savage fury to fill the corridors of the amphitheatre with wood, to which he set fire with an intent to injure, tho' it surpassed his power to demolish, so vast an edifice. Yet notwithstanding these attempts of the barbarous nations, notwithstanding the lapse of so many ages, and the effects of time, its appearance at present is the most august and majestic which can be presented to the mind, or to the senses. The prodigious circumference of the amphithéâtre, the solidity and strength of its construction, the awful majesty of so vast a pile, half perfect, half in ruin, impress one with a tumult of
sentiments

sentiments which it is difficult to convey to you by any description.—The “maison quarrée,” is in the most complete preservation, and appears to me to be the most perfect piece of architecture in the world. The order is the Corinthian, and all the beauties of that elegant style seem to be exhausted in its construction. This superb temple is now converted into a chapel dedicated to the Virgin, ornamented with gilding, and other holy finery, suitable to such an alteration.

At a quarter of a mile from the city of Nîmes is another temple, much decayed, which immemorial tradition relates to have been consecrated to Diana; but which by antiquaries is generally supposed to have been sacred to the “Dii infernales,” as it is evident that no light was admitted into it, a circumstance peculiar to the temples of the infernal Gods. In the inside, are numbers of mutilated statues, marbles, capitals, and inscriptions, which have been found there from time to time. Close to it rises a fountain, which may vie with that of Vaucluse in beauty, tho’ not in fame. It furnishes a

great quantity of water, which never diminishes in the longest droughts; but as the channel thro' which it flows had become obstructed in a series of ages by sand and gravel, the inhabitants of Nîmes undertook some years ago to cleanse and restore its course. In the progress of this work they discovered a number of Roman coins, rings, and other antiquities, several of which are equally rare and well preserved. On the summit of the rock from whence the fountain issues, stands a building which has much exercised the opinions of the learned. It is incontestibly Roman, and is vulgarly called "La Tour magne." Its exposed situation has conduced to hasten its decay; but at what time it was built, or for what purposes it served, are now totally unknown.

Nîmes is an ill-built place, containing in itself nothing extraordinary or remarkable. A hundred fables are related concerning its origin, which is carried into times anterior by many centuries to the Roman conquests; and it probably does not occupy at present the fourth part of the ground on which it formerly stood. I left Nîmes this afternoon. The dis-

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tance is only twenty miles from this place; but the wind blew such a hurricane, as I scarce ever remember. The passage across the Rhone at Tarascon, which divides Provence from Languedoc, is over a bridge of boats; and I own I passed it with some apprehensions, as they assure me it is not uncommon for carriages to be carried over into the river by violent gusts of wind.

The view of the Rhone here is very picturesque. On one side in Languedoc, stands Beaucaire, a considerable town, with a ruined castle overhanging a rock; on this side is situated Tarascon, with a correspondent castle, far more considerable, and washed by the waves. The river here is much broader than the Thames at London.

To-morrow I proceed for Aix and Marseilles.

Marfeilles, 5th January, 1776.

I Scarce ever remember even in our northern climate, a colder day than that on which I continued my journey from Tarascon to this city. Winter seem'd to have taken possession of the face of nature before its time. The olive-trees were covered with snow which fell very fast, and the "Bize" which blew in my face, and came from the summits of the Alps, rendered the weather extremely severe.—At St. Remi, a little town only four leagues from Tarascon, I drove about a mile out of the road, to see the remains of the monuments erected by the Consul Marius as trophies of his victory gained over the Cimbri and Teutones. Tho' so many ages have elapsed since their construction, they yet forcibly recall the idea of Rome, the conqueror of the earth, and queen of nations.

It was night when I arrived at Aix, where I staid three days. The city has that air of silence and gloom so commonly characteristic of places destitute of commerce or industry, and forms a striking contrast to Marfeilles,
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where opulence and population are every where visible. The warm springs from which it is now known and frequented, induced Sextius Calvinus to found a Roman colony there, to which he gave the name of "Aquæ Sextiæ." They were supposed, probably with reason, to possess particular virtues in cases of debility; and several altars have been dug up sacred to Priapus, the inscriptions on which indicate their gratitude to that deity for his supposed succour and assistance. I saw nothing in the cathedral deserving attention except the tomb of Charles of Anjou, last of the great Angevin line, Kings of Naples, and Counts of Provence. He died, if I recollect right, in 1483, and bequeathed both his real and titular dominions to Louis the eleventh, king of France. The claims on the Neapolitan crown derived from him, were the foundation of those long and unhappy wars begun by Charles the eighth, and continued under his two successors.

The distance from Aix to this city is only twenty miles. There is notwithstanding, a considerable difference in the climate of Marseilles, which is milder in winter, and cooler

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during the heats of summer, from its vicinity to the Mediterranean. Nature seems to have marked out this place for commerce, by the advantages she has bestowed on it. The entrance of the harbour, which is extremely narrow and surrounded by lofty mountains, protects and shelters vessels during the most violent storms. The port itself forms a delightful walk at this season of the year, as it is open to the southern sun, and crowded with vast numbers of people, not only of all the European nations, but of Turks, Greeks, and natives of the coast of Barbary. The whole scene is one of the most agreeable that can be imagined; if the chains of the galley slaves heard among the hum of business, did not tincture it with the hateful idea of slavery. The gallies themselves, useless and neglected, rot peaceably in their respective stations; and it is said that no others will ever be constructed to supply their place, as they have long ceased to be of any utility to the state, and are scarcely even navigable in severe weather.

During the short residence I have made here, I am yet forcibly struck with the wide difference

ference between the genius of the Provençaux, and that generally attributed to the French. The common people have a brutality and rudeness of manners more characteristic of a republican, than of a monarchical and absolute government. Their language, so famous in ancient romance, is a corrupt Italian, more intelligible to a Neapolitan than to a Parisian. The women are lively, beautiful, and disposed from their complexion to gallantry. A fire, an extreme vivacity unknown to the northern nations of Europe, and which results from a penetrating air, a genial sun, and skies for ever blue, is strongly discernible in their eyes, their conversation, the peculiar dances and music of the country; in all which a warm and impassioned animation forms the predominant quality. I am afraid to express how many charms there appear to me in this gaiety of character and disposition, lest you should think I mean to contrast it with the formality of our own country, where we seldom allow the heart to act uninfluenced by the judgment.

Marseilles pretends to the most remote antiquity, a colony of Phocians in ages un-

known, having given it birth. The “old city” is one of the most ill built of any in Europe, nor have I ever had courage enough to penetrate into its recesses, which are insupportably filthy. The modern Marseilles has sprung up since the commencement of the eighteenth century, and has all that regularity, elegance, and convenience, which distinguish the present times. I am inclined to consider it as one of the most eligible places of winter residence in the world, and far superior, where health is not an object of attention, to Nice or Montpellier. In the carnival, I am assured, that it is uncommonly gay. The surrounding country is rocky and barren, but covered for several miles on all sides, with villas and summer houses, which commerce has erected.

The intention I once had of visiting Corsica and Sardinia, I have relinquished, chiefly on account of the few objects of entertainment or information which those islands offer to the mind; and I have determined to remain here till the ensuing spring, when I shall probably return through the inland provinces of this kingdom to England. Meanwhile I remain, &c.

Clermont,

Clermont, in Auvergne,
Friday, 26th of April, 1776.

AFTER a silence of near four months, I again resume my pen from among the mountains of Auvergne, at the distance of more than a hundred leagues from Marseilles. I have now exchanged the delicious climate of Provence, its warm sun, and the shore of the Mediterranean, for a very different scene.

I quitted Marseilles on the sixth of this month, and arrived at Avignon the evening of the ensuing day. It was impossible for me not to dedicate some time to the view of a city so renowned in past ages, the seat of the sovereign Pontiffs during more than half a century, the residence of Petrarch, and the birth-place of Laura. I felt that pleasure which results to every reflecting mind, from the consciousness of being on a spot rendered famous by poetry, or genius, or great achievements. I compared Avignon, as it now exists, with the picture which Petrarch has drawn of it in his writings, and attempted
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to ascertain the situation of his mistress's abode, which is yet pointed out by tradition in one of the suburbs. I went to the church of the Cordeliers, where rest her remains. In a little dark chapel on the right hand, now disused for religious ceremonies, damp, cold, and unwholesome, beneath the arch which forms the entrance, and under a plain stone, lies that Laura who was once so beautiful; and who can never die while her lover's fame and works survive. Round the stone are some ancient Gothic characters covered with earth, and rendered illegible by time. You will perhaps recollect that Francis the first, the most accomplished prince who ever reigned in France, and who eminently possessed the enthusiasm which usually distinguishes and characterises genius, caused the tomb of Laura to be opened in his own presence. A wish to pervade the obscurity in which Petrarch has affected to involve the name of his mistress, and the history of his own unhappy passion; added to a desire of ascertaining by some incontestible proof the burial-place of Laura, were the motives which influenced Francis to commit this seeming violation of the repose.

repose of the dead. Some small human bones, supposed to be her's, and a leaden box which contained a scrawl of Italian verses obscurely alluding to Petrarch's attachment to her, were all which repaid the monarch's curiosity. It is needless to remind you, that Laura died of the plague which desolated the greater part of Europe in 1347 and the following year, and of which Boccace has drawn the most animated and distressful picture which can be held up to the human imagination.

It seems impossible to recognize the situation or adjacent country of Avignon as they appear at present, under the melancholy colours with which Petrarch has shaded them. The fertile plain of the "Comtat Venaissin" in which the city stands, and the rich banks of the Rhone, are described by him as a frightful desert, through which pours a river swept by continual winds and tempests. Ovid has given us the same horrible idea of the coast of the Black Sea, a climate incontestably one of the finest of the earth, and blessed with an almost perpetual spring. The gloomy medium thro' which the two poets regarded every object, explains this extraordinary fact.

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The latter, only occupied with the painful recollection of the luxurious pleasures which reigned in the court of Augustus, and from which he was for ever banished, was lost to every sense of joy or delight. Petrarch, an exile from Italy his native country, always cherishing the fond idea of revisiting Florence, and despising the manners, while he detested the city of Avignon, set no bounds to his exclamations and complaints. Neither the distinguished favour of several succeeding popes with which he was honour'd, nor the consideration of its being the spot which gave birth to his mistress Laura, could soften or diminish his antipathy to Avignon.—For me, who viewed it impartially, and without prejudice, I confess I was charmed with the situation. The prospect from the summit of the rock in the center of the city is of uncommon beauty. The “Vent de Bize,” which blew in my face, was indeed extremely severe, but I comforted myself, that tho’ piercing, it was yet wholesome, and that if Louis the eleventh, when in a state of debility had ordered intercessions to Heaven to avert it, Augustus, on the other hand, was so well convinced of the
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salubrious and invigorating qualities of that wind, that he erected an altar to it, and ordered it to be placed among the Gods.

The Rhone itself is a noble object, rolling rapidly through meadows covered with olive trees, and divided into two considerable channels opposite to Avignon. Across it, extend the ruinous and decayed arches of that bridge, against which Madame de Grignan was so near being lost, and of which Madame de Sevigné makes terrified mention. It was demolished in 1699, by one of the inundations common to the Rhone. When entire, it was not less than a quarter of a mile in length; but being so narrow as not to permit two carriages to pass in any part, it had previously become almost useless; and motives of policy prevent the construction of a new bridge, while Avignon belongs, as it still does, to the papal see.——On the farther side of the Rhone, in Languedoc, stands Ville Neuve, a considerable town, with a magnificent monastery of Benedictines on a rock, correspondent to that on which is built the cathedral of Avignon. The high mountain of Ventoux, in the province of Dauphiné, covered with snow, and
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which Petrarch has described, appears to the north; and the savage rocks of Vaucluse bound the view to the eastward, at the distance of fifteen miles. Beneath spreads an extensive vale, water'd by several rivulets which lose themselves in the Rhone, and which is cultivated with the utmost industry.

The city of Avignon itself is in general ill built, irregular, and devoid of beauty; but the Gothic walls and ramparts with which it has been surrounded by different pontiffs, are well preserved, and are an object of high curiosity. I recollect none so perfect in any part of France. Several popes and antipopes, who during their lives shook the Romish church with violence and mutual altercation, repose quietly near each other, in the various monasteries of the place; and in that of the Cordeliers, almost opposite to Laura's, is the tomb of the brave Grillon, so well known for his invincible courage, as well as for his unshaken attachment to his sovereign, Henry the fourth.

You will not doubt that I visited the fountain of Vaucluse, immortalized by Petrarch, and to which he so often retired to indulge
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his grief and hopeless love. It is only five leagues distant from Avignon, and as I set out early in the morning, I reached the entrance of the valley about ten o'clock. I got out of my carriage, and walked along the banks of the Sorgue, for so the river is called which issues from the fountain. Meadows of the most lively green skirt its sides, above which rise abrupt and lofty rocks, that seem designed to seclude it from human view. The valley becomes gradually narrower toward the extremity, and winding continually describes the figure of a horse-shoe. The view is at length terminated by an enormous mass of rock, forming a barrier across it, of a prodigious height, and absolutely perpendicular. Through its vast recesses run the streams which supply the fountain of Vaucluse, and at its foot appears a basin of water, several hundred feet in circumference, stretched like an expanse, silent and quiet. The sides are very steep, and it is said that in the middle no bottom can be discovered; tho' attempts have been often made for that purpose; a circumstance probably resulting from the violence with which the springs bubble up, which prevents

vents any weight from descending beyond a certain depth. Tho' the fountain is clearer in itself than crystal, yet the incumbent rock casts a continual shade, approaching to black, over its surface. The water escaping from this state of inaction by a narrow passage, is immediately precipitated in a cascade down a rocky channel, where it foams over a number of vast, detached stones, which intercept and impede its progress. They are covered with a deep green moss of many ages, and have probably tumbled from the mountains that overhang the torrent. The rocks themselves, which surround and invest this romantic spot, are worn by time, and the inclemency of the weather, into a thousand extraordinary and fantastic forms, to which imagination gives shape and figure. On one of the pointed extremities, and in a situation which appears almost inaccessible, are seen the remains of an ancient castle, projecting over the water. The peasants call it "Il castello di Petrarca," and add, with great simplicity, that Laura lived upon the opposite side of the river, under the bed of which was a subterranean passage by which the two lovers visited each

each other. Nothing is however more certain than that these are the ruins of the Chateau belonging to the lords or Seigneurs of Avignon; and the bishop of Cavaillon resided in it during the frequent visits which he used to make to Petrarch.—The poet's dwelling was much lower down, and nearer to the bank of the Sorgue, as evidently appears from his minute description of it, and the relation he gives of his quarrel with the Naiads of the stream, who encroached during the winter on his little adjoining territory. No remains of it are now to be discerned.

I sat down on the edge of the basin, to consider the scene, and the romantic assemblage of objects which presented themselves on every side. I looked with a mixt sensation of pleasure and of pain, upon the valley and the fountain which had been so often witnesses to Petrarch's complaints, and hopeless passion. I attempted to discern the cavern, which, during the summer, when the waters of Vaucluse are low, opens into the recesses of the rock, and where he used alone, in the dead of night, to indulge his despair. While I was lost in these reflections, the day darkened,
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and a sudden storm of rain, from which I was completely sheltered by the incumbent mountain, issuing from a collection of black clouds overhanging the spot, spread through the whole landscape a majestic and awful sublimity. When it was past, I retir'd, tho' reluctantly, from this beautiful and celebrated solitude.

Before I got into my carriage, the peasant who had attended me to the fountain, conducted me to a house situated in the valley, where are still preserved two portraits of the lovers who have rendered Vaucluse immortal. My chief attention was directed to that of Laura. She appears to be in the earliest bloom of youth, such as she is described by Petrarch on that morning when he first beheld her. An air of playful gaiety seems diffused over her countenance. Her eyes are large and of a deep hazel, her nose justly proportioned, and the contour of her face a perfect oval. Her hair, the colour of which approaches to yellow, is confined by a fillet braided and adorned with pearls; over her neck is a faint shade of gauze; her robe is of a pale red, and her arms are covered with

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a sort of glove which descends half way the hands. In one of them she holds an amaranth, the emblem of immortality. — Petrarch is painted as in middle life, of an engaging figure, and his brows bound with laurel.

I return'd to Avignon in the evening, and quitted it on the morning of the ensuing day. At Orange where I breakfasted, it was impossible not to dedicate an hour to the remains of the Roman theatre, and the triumphal arch of Marius ; edifices the most august and magnificent, tho' defaced by the lapse of near two thousand years, and of which I might be tempted perhaps to give you a description, if it had not already been done by so many preceding travellers. — I continued my journey to Lyons along the eastern bank of the Rhone. On the other side of that river appear the high mountains of the Vivarais covered with snow, and to the right are those of Dauphiné extending to the Alps, with which they join. As I advanced north, the weather became more sharp and piercing, while the " Bize " blew with redoubled keenness, and chilled the spring which was just opening. I arrived at Lyons after three days journey. My road from thence

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to this city, lay thro' the provinces of Beaujolois and Forez, the first of which, tho' hilly, is finely cultivated. Between Lyons and Roanne I passed over the high mountain of Tarare, so dreaded in the last century. From its summit is a prodigious prospect, only bounded towards Savoy by the Alps, which form a vast barrier covered with eternal snow. At Roanne I enter'd the Forez, a small province, barren, uncultivated, and thinly inhabited. A chain of lofty mountains extends quite across it; thick forests of pine and fir cover the steep acclivities, and afford refuge to wolves and wild boars, which are there found in great numbers. Scarce a hamlet is seen in several miles; and the silence, the depopulation, and romantic solitudes thro' which I pass'd, strongly reminded me of Sweden or Finland.

I arrived on Wednesday at Thiers, a considerable town situated on the steep side of a mountain, from whence is beheld a most delicious landscape. The country extends for many leagues on all sides, in a cultivated plain, terminated by another range of mountains, and Clermont itself is distinctly seen at

the distance of five-and-twenty miles. This rich tract of the Auvergne is denominated "La Limagne," and forms a basin completely surrounded by rocks and hills. The soil is uncommonly fertile, and inferior to no part of France. Several fine streams intersect it, and add to the beauty of the scene.

I got to this place yesterday. The situation of Clermont is agreeable, on a gentle eminence, the ascent to which is gradual and easy. The city itself within the walls, seems to have been built in an age the most barbarous, the streets being so narrow and winding that no carriage can enter them, and the buildings are of correspondent antiquity; but to compensate for these inconveniences, the suburbs are charming, and the houses modern and elegant. I visited this morning the petrifying spring, which Charles the ninth of France is said to have surveyed with so much pleasure and admiration. It is only a quarter of a mile from the town. In a course of ages, the spring has formed a ridge of stone or incrustation not less than sixteen feet in height, above a hundred feet long, and in some parts near ten in thickness. As it impeded, and at

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length totally stopped the current of a little rivulet which intersected its course, the inhabitants were obliged to dig a passage through it. The stream is now directed into another channel, and has begun to form a new bridge across the rivulet into which it falls.

It was my intention to have penetrated farther into this romantic province, but the season is too early to permit me to ascend any of the highest mountains of Auvergne. I should however certainly have gone to Usson, which is only ten leagues distant, if any remains of the castle still existed. I scarcely need remind you that Margaret of Valois, wife to Henry the fourth, was shut up in it during twenty years. A gentleman who resides at Issoire near the spot, gave me this description of it.

“ The castle of Usson stood upon the summit of an almost inaccessible rock, at the foot of which flowed a little river. The queen, by a masterly piece of address, expelled the Marquis de Canillac, to whose custody she was confided, and rendered herself mistress of the place. It has been demolished by time, and the rude hands of
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" the neighbouring peasants, who have re-
 " moved almost all the stones which composed
 " the castle. Some ruins of it yet remain
 " in the last stage of decay, which the
 " vulgar apprehend to have been formerly
 " sacred to religious purposes, and which
 " they denominate, ' Les Chapelles de la
 " Reine Marguerite.' It is true that they
 " were constructed by that Queen; but she
 " had dedicated them to pleasure, not to de-
 " votion, and gave rendezvous in these
 " apartments to the neighbouring nobility of
 " Auvergne. No other traces remain at this
 " time of Usson."

My letter is already of an immoderate
 length; I shall only add to it, that I am
 yours, &c.

Bourges in Berri, 6th of May, 1776.

I Left Clermont sooner than I had intended, in compliance with an invitation which I could not refuse, to pass some time at the Chateau de P—— belonging to the Count de L——. The house is situated in an unfrequented part of Auvergne, towards the confines of the Bourbonnois, on a rising ground, which commands an enchanting prospect. Through the plain below, flows the river Allier, mentioned in terms of such lively admiration by Madame de Sevigné, and on whose banks, she says, might yet be discovered some of the shepherds of fiction and romance. Monsieur de L—— was not at home, and I was received by the Countess in a manner the most noble and polite. She did me the honour to detain me five days, which I passed in a way never to be erased from my remembrance. I would describe to you her person, but that I shall give you a more just idea of it in saying that she strikingly resembled the portrait of the duchess of Mazarin, as drawn by the Abbé de

de St. Real. Her other accomplishments were not inferior to her beauty; and when she danced the Bourrée, (a dance peculiar to Auvergne,) I thought Hortensia Mancini could not have been comparable to Madame de L——. I took my leave of her with that reluctance, natural to a person impressed with pleasure and respect.

At Montpensier, I stopped to view the mount where formerly stood the castle, now totally demolished, and which is rendered famous in history by the death of Louis the eighth, king of France, and father of St. Louis. He died there in 1226, on his return from the siege of Avignon, and as was commonly supposed, of poison administered to him by the Count de Champagne.

I arrived the ensuing day at Moulins, which stands in a fine plain close to the river Allier, along the sides of which are planted walks of elm, poplar and aspin. The city, tho' the capital of the province of Bourbonnois, is mean and ill built. I went immediately on my arrival, to the church of the nunnery of the Visitation, to see the Mausoleum of Henry Duke of Montmorenci, of

whom I have already had occasion more than once to make mention. It was erected to his memory by the Duchess, his wife, Marie Felice des Ursins. I looked at this superb monument with sensations of the deepest pity for the unfortunate hero to whom it was raised. Castelnaudari, and Leytoure, and Toulouse, all crowded into my mind.—The tomb itself is composed of the most beautiful and costly marbles. The Duke appears in a reclining attitude, his left arm supported on his helmet; and by him sits his widow, her eyes directed to heaven, her hands clasped, and over her whole figure is an expression of disconsolate sorrow strongly marked.

It is a delightful ride from Moulins to Nevers, thro' the provinces of Bourbonnois and Nivernois. In the center of Nevers, on the summit of a hill, is built the palace of the ancient Dukes. It appears to have been constructed in the sixteenth century, and, tho' beginning to exhibit marks of decay, is yet a model of beauty and delicacy of Gothic architecture. The apartments are hung with tapestry of two hundred years old, which have an air of grotesque and rude magnificence.

nificence. I was detained in one of the chambers for some minutes, by a portrait of Madame de Montespan, who appears rising from a superb couch, the curtains of which are drawn back, and supported by Cupids. Her attitude is half voluptuous, half contemplative. She is dressed in a negligent deshabille, and her hair floats down over her shoulders and neck in waving ringlets. Her head rests on her left hand, and one of her feet is concealed by her robe; the other, which is naked to the mid-leg, and on which the painter, with great taste has exhausted all his art, is placed on an embroidered cushion. Her slippers are thrown carelessly by. I was charmed with the portrait.

I passed the river Loire at La Charité, where I entered the province of Berri; the distance from thence to this city is about twelve leagues. The country is much inferior in beauty and cultivation to that between Moulins and Nevers. The far greater part consists in thick woods, or barren heaths destitute of inhabitants. Bourges is situated in the midst of a plain, open and level as the sea. The city is of a very considerable size,

and of great antiquity, a claim, the validity of which most of the buildings evince by the barbarism of their construction, which marks an age of total rudeness and ignorance of the arts. I have seen scarce a house which does not appear to have stood many hundred years. — The “Hotel de Ville” was built by the celebrated Jacques Cœur, so well known in the French history by his greatness, his loyalty, his exile, and his misfortunes. Over the portal, is a fine statue of Charles the seventh, under whose reign he flourished; the king is habited in complete armour, and mounted on horseback. That prince usually held his court here; and you will certainly recollect, that during the extreme distress in which his affairs were involved at the commencement of his reign, the English, elated with their victories under Henry the fifth, bestowed on him the contemptuous appellation of “Le petit Roi de Bourges,” from the loyal and constant attachment which the citizens expressed towards him, through every change of fortune.

The tower, denominated “La grosse tour,” in which Louis the twelfth of France, when

when only Duke of Orleans, was detained a prisoner more than two years by the Lady of Beaujeu, regent under Charles the eighth, exists no longer. It was demolished in 1651 during the minority of Louis the fourteenth, by order of Cardinal Mazarin; and a modern building has been constructed on the spot, from the stones which composed that edifice.

During my stay here, I went to see the tomb of Jane of Valois, daughter to Louis the eleventh, and wife to Louis the twelfth, from whom he was divorced, to marry Anne of Bretagne, on his accession to the crown of France. The repudiated princess retired to this city, and having dedicated her remaining days to piety, died in the convent of St. Jane, which she had founded. One of the nuns shewed me, through the grating, her slippers and nuptial robes, which are preserved with great care; and she added, that innumerable miracles had been performed by her relics and intercession.

The cathedral of Bourges is a most magnificent edifice, tho' the external architecture of the building does not correspond in beauty or symmetry to its interior. The church

is of prodigious dimensions, far exceeding any we have in England, and the quantity of painted glass which it contains, is scarce inferior to that at Gouda in Holland. John, duke of Berri, and brother to Charles the fifth king of France, lies buried in the subterranean chapel under the cathedral, beneath a marble tomb of costly workmanship. He is too well known in history under the unhappy reign of Charles the sixth, his nephew, when the frenzy with which that unfortunate prince was seized, gave full scope to the intrigues and ambition of his uncles.

Scarce any other objects present themselves to the eye in this city except ruins, and I am almost afraid as I walk through the narrow winding streets, that the buildings will fall upon my head. If Charles the seventh could revive, I am persuaded he would perfectly recognize the place, which appears to have undergone very little alteration, or received any embellishment, during more than three centuries which have elapsed since his death.

Louis the eleventh was born at Bourges, and in the "Hotel de Ville" is a painting descriptive of this event. France, under the
figure

figure of a woman, appears rising from her throne to receive the medallion of that monarch, which is presented to her by the Genius of Berri.

This province, tho' large and naturally fertile, is little cultivated or improved; a circumstance chiefly resulting from the want of any navigable river, by which the grain and other productions might be transported to different quarters of the kingdom.

To-morrow morning I leave Bourges. From Orleans or Blois you may expect to hear of
Yours, &c.

Blois, Tuesday, 14th May, 1776.

I Staid some hours at Mehun-sur-Yeure in Berri, to contemplate the magnificent remains of the castle. It is only four leagues distant from Bourges, and is rendered famous in history by the death of Charles the seventh of France who constructed it, and who died there in 1461, by a voluntary abstinence from food, caused by the apprehension of being poisoned by his own son, Louis the eleventh. The situation of the castle is not favour'd by nature, and corresponds ill with the grandeur of the structure. It stands in a wide-extended plain, sheltered by deep woods, and at its foot flows the little river Yeure, which dividing at the spot into several streams, forms a number of marshy islands covered with willows. Tho' the castle of Mehun has been burnt by lightning, as well as greatly injured by time, and the depredations of the neighbouring peasants, yet its ruins are even now inexpressibly august and beautiful. I visited every part of it which was accessible. The great tower is very perfect, and three of the apartments which
appear

appear to have been rooms of state, might almost be inhabited at present. The chamber where, as it is said, the unhappy king expir'd, is in one of the smaller towers, the entrance into which is obstructed by the stones which have fallen from above. The whole edifice is composed of a stone nearly equal to marble in whiteness and durability, and is surrounded by a deep ditch. In the center stands the chapel, the workmanship and delicacy of which are astonishing. The castle appears to me to be one of the finest monuments now existing in Europe of the taste and style of architecture in the fifteenth century, when the arts began slowly to revive from their slumber of so many ages.

Charles the seventh is described by the French historians under colours similar to those, with which Pope in his notes on the Iliad has drawn the portrait of Paris. Naturally brave, munificent, amiable, protecting and cultivating all the elegant occupations of a liberal mind; but sinking continually into an indolent effeminacy, and sacrificing every grand or patriotic sentiment to the fascinating charms of female beauty.—The castle of Me-

hun

hun appears never to have been the favourite residence of any succeeding king of France, after the death of Charles. It was neglected by the immediate successors of that prince, lost in the superior lustre of Fontainbleau and Chambord under Francis the first, and ultimately alienated by Louis the fourteenth, to support his ruinous and expensive wars in the last century.

I pursued my journey through the provinces of Berri and Sologne to Orleans, where I arrived the ensuing day. The entrance into it is noble and striking from the south, over a fine bridge across the Loire of nine arches. The city itself is in general very meanly built, and the streets narrow, one only excepted, which leads from the bridge, and is composed of modern, elegant buildings. In this street stands the celebrated monument where Charles the seventh and the Maid of Orleans are represented on their knees before the body of our Saviour, who lies extended on the lap of the Virgin. It was erected by order of that monarch in 1458, to perpetuate his victories over the English, and their expulsion from his dominions. All the figures
are

are in iron. The king appears bareheaded, and by him lies his helmet surmounted with a crown. Opposite to him is the Maid herself, in the same attitude of grateful devotion to Heaven. It is a most precious and invaluable historical monument.

In the "Hotel de Ville" is a portrait of the same immortal woman, which I studied long and attentively. Tho' it was not done till 1581, which was near 130 years after her decease, it is yet the oldest original picture of her now existing. The painter seems undoubtedly to have drawn a flattering resemblance of her, and to have given his heroine imaginary charms. Her face, tho' long, is of exceeding beauty, heighten'd by an expression of intelligence and grandeur rarely united. Her hair falls loosely down her back, and she wears on her head a sort of bonnet enriched with pearls, and shaded with white plumes, tied under her chin with a string. About her neck is a little collar, and lower down, upon her bosom, a necklace composed of small links. Her dress, which is that of a woman, I find it difficult exactly to describe. It fits close to the body, and is cut or slashed

at

at the arms and elbows. Round her waist is an embroidered girdle, and in her right hand she holds the sword with which she expelled the enemies of her sovereign, and her country. I am not surpriz'd at the animated and enthusiastic attachment which the French still cherish for her memory. The critical and desperate emergency in which she appeared; her sex, youth, and even the obscurity of her birth; the unparallel'd success which crowned her enterprize; the cruel and detestable sentence by which she was put to death; the air of the marvellous spread over the whole narration, encreased and strengthened by that veneration which time affixes to every great event—all these united causes conspire to place her above mortality. Rome and Athens would undoubtedly have ranked her among their tutelary deities, and have erected temples to her honour; nor can I help being amazed that amidst the almost infinite number of modern saints who croud and disgrace their churches, no altar has yet been dedicated to the Maid of Orleans.

The environs of Orleans, more especially in the province of Sologne to the south of the

the

the Loire, are very agreeable. It is in general a level country covered with corn and vines. I rode out during my stay there to "La Source," a villa rendered celebrated by the abode of Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, who passed the chief part of his exile in this retreat. Near the house, in a hollow dell, is the spring from which the place has received its name, and which may be regarded as a most extraordinary phenomenon. The water rises out of the earth from a very narrow aperture in a prodigious column, and forms immediately a considerable river called the Loiret, which after winding its course about two leagues, is lost in the Loire. Monsieur B—— to whom the place now belongs, has deformed and totally disfigured this beautiful fountain, by an ill-judged and mistaken taste. Instead of a dark and gloomy hollow shaded by deep woods, and adapted to the genius of the scene, in the midst of which the spring formerly rose with violence out of the earth, he has enlarged the opening from whence it issues; and it now only appears to bubble up scarce above the surface of the ground, in the middle of a shallow,
artificial

artificial basin. No trees of any kind conceal or shelter it from view, and after first passing through a narrow channel, it is dispersed in the form of a looking-glass before the house. One cannot view so ridiculous and absurd a metamorphosis, without the greatest regret, mixed with indignation.

I left Orleans on Sunday morning, and arrived here the same evening. Curiosity to visit the tomb of Louis the eleventh, who is interred at "Notre Dame de Clery," induced me to take the road through that place, tho' less direct. I passed the bridge of St. Mesmin, memorable for the assassination of Francis duke of Guise, with Brantôme in my hand, and attempted, from his minute and exact description, to ascertain the precise spot where that illustrious prince was killed by Meré Poltrot, during the civil wars of France under Charles the ninth.

The church of Clery was built by Louis the eleventh, who had always a singular and capricious devotion for the Virgin Mary, to whom it is dedicated. He always denominated her "Ma bonne notre Dame de Clery." From a similar superstition, he
ordered

ordered his body to be interred there, under a monument, which he had himself erected. The Hugonots, in the civil wars under Catherine of Medicis, broke open his tomb, and scattered the bones about the church with a savage ferocity. Louis the thirteenth caused the present monument to be constructed in 1622, which is composed of white marble, and well executed. The king is on his knees, in an attitude of prayer, his hands raised to heaven. His queen, Charlotte of Savoy, was originally buried in the same tomb, and Charles the eighth caused his own heart to be deposited there near his father's remains.

I crossed the Loire again at Beaugency, and spent the whole afternoon in the gardens and groves of Menars. This was the seat of the celebrated Madame de Pompadour, who began to improve the place, and bequeathed it at her death to the Marquis de Marigny her only brother. The situation, which is on a high range of hills overhanging the Loire, is of unparallel'd beauty; and the eye is continually entertained on every side with a prospect the most extensive, delicious, and cultivated. Towns and palaces and castles,
intermixed

intermixed with forests, hamlets, abbeys and vineyards, are spread below, while a noble river pouring through the plain, diffuses plenty and fertility in its progress. The gardens themselves are laid out with great elegance, and adorned with a number of statues, chiefly presented to the Marquis by his late Majesty, Louis the fifteenth. A "Pasiphaë," lamenting Phaeton, and beginning to take root, detained me for some minutes; but I left this figure to observe an "Atlas," than which nothing can be more perfect. The statue is larger than the life, and as Atlas is in the act of attempting to tear himself from the rock into which he is about to be transformed, all his muscles are necessarily in the most violent state of exertion. The artist has found means to give a sort of suction to the stone, which makes it appear to draw in the limbs of Atlas, and in some parts to have taken possession of them. It is a masterly production of sculpture. Monsieur de Marigny has prodigiously improved the place since the Marchioness of Pompadour's decease. The terrace does not yield to that of Windsor or of St. Germain; and the woods, through which winds
a mur-

a murmuring rivulet, are of the most secluded solitude. In the midst of them, concealed under a thick cover of trees, appears a Cupid, who seems as if just alighted on a pedestal covered with roses. Nothing can exceed the archness of his looks, which make one tremble ;—but he has his finger on his lips.

To-morrow you shall hear more. I am fatigued, but it is the fatigue of pleasure.

Blois, Wednesday, 15th May, 1776.

IT is impossible for any person to be destitute of some emotions of pleasure, at the view of a place so renowned in history, as the city from which I write. Judge then what I experience, who cannot behold the spot where any great atchievement has been performed in ages past without the liveliest enthusiasm, when I look upon the castle, where Louis the twelfth, the father of his people was born; in which were solemnised the nuptials of Margaret of Valois, sister of Francis the first, and of the second Margaret, wife of Henry the fourth! where Isabella of Bavaria, and Mary of Medicis queens of France, were imprisoned! within whose walls the duke and the cardinal of Guise were sacrificed to the vengeance of Henry the third! where Valentina of Milan, where Anne of Bretagne, and Claude her daughter died; and to close this august series of princes, where Catherine of Medicis so renowned for her genius and her crimes, likewise expired!—I tread with reverence over the ground, render'd in some degree

gree sacred, and view with a solemn delight the towers once inhabited by Queens and monarchs, now tending to decay, or covered with ivy, which spreads a twilight through the apartments at noon-day. An air of melancholy and departed greatness is strongly diffused through the whole palace, and encreased by the silence which reigns universally. The cyphers and devices of succeeding princes are faintly discerned on the front of the edifice, or over the gateways. I distinguish the "Porcupine" of Louis the twelfth, the "Salamander" of Francis the first, and the amorous "Crescent" of his son Henry the second. I trace the remains of the gallery constructed by Henry the fourth, and wander in the avenue of elms planted by Catherine of Medicis; or survey with regret the superb and unfinished palace of Gaston duke of Orleans.—You must pardon these unconnected exclamations, which have escaped me in spite of myself. I will now endeavour to give you some more methodical and intelligible description of the place.

The castle of Blois stands on a rock immediately above the Loire, and commands a
view,

view hardly, if at all inferior to that seen from Menars. The ancient Counts of Blois held their constant residence here, and constructed the original castle, of which no remains now subsist, except one large round tower. Guy, the last Count of the house of Chatillon sold it to Louis Duke of Orleans, brother to Charles the sixth of France, and who was afterwards murdered in the "Rue Barbette" at Paris, in 1407; from whom it descended to Louis the twelfth, his grandson. The eastern and southern sides, as they now subsist, were built by that king, and over the grand gateway is an equestrian statue of him, habited in a coat of mail. The style of architecture merits great attention; and some of the figures which support the windows, are of a nature so very indecent, that in the state of refinement to which modern manners have attained, it excites our surprize how a prince so virtuous as Louis the twelfth is represented to have been, or a queen so rigid and so reserved in her manners as was Anne of Bretagne, could ever have permitted them to be placed in the most conspicuous part of a royal palace. It is a striking proof of the gross and unpolished manners of the sixteenth century.

The

The northern front of the castle was built by Francis the first, soon after his accession to the throne of France. A more splendid style, a workmanship approaching in delicacy and elegance to the Greek and Roman architecture, discriminates it from the former, and we evidently trace the advancement in the arts made by a more refined and liberal age. The apartments are all spacious and magnificent, tho' now dismantled and neglected. I was shewn the celebrated chamber in which Henry duke of Guise was assassinated in 1588, by order of Henry the third. The stones which were tinged with his blood, have been almost scraped away by the curiosity of successive travellers. At the western extremity of the building is the tower of Chateau-Regnaud, famous for having been the scene of the murder of the Cardinal of Guise. I went down into the dungeon where that ambitious and unfortunate prelate passed the night previous to his execution, with his companion, the Archbishop of Lyons. Two doors of massy iron open into a gloomy chamber, vaulted, and into which the light is only admitted by

one small window closed with iron bars. The figure of the room is irregular, and may be about twenty feet in diameter. In the middle is a round hole sufficiently large to receive the body of a man, and under it are three ranges of dungeons, one beneath the other. The Cardinal himself was put to death in a sort of recess hollowed into the wall, on the day following that of his brother the Duke of Guise. The guards executed the order with their halberds.—— They both perished the just martyrs of their inordinate ambition; and this assassination is, I believe, the only one mentioned in history, for which, if possible, the circumstances seem almost to plead a full exculpation.

At the eastern termination of the northern front is the “Salle des Etats,” where Henry the third assembled the states twice during his distracted reign. It is a vast hall, now disused and almost in ruins. In the chimney, the bodies of the Duke and Cardinal of Guise, after their assassination, are said to have been consumed to ashes. You will perhaps recollect the animated apostrophe of their mother

the Duchess of Guise, to the statue of Louis the twelfth, on receiving the news of the death of her two children. She was daughter to Renee of Ferrara, and grand-daughter to that monarch. Henry the third sent her a captive to Amboise, after the execution of her sons. Having embarked upon the Loire, she turned towards the castle of Blois, and invoking with lifted arms the shade of her royal ancestor, whose statue was over the portal, "Ah! grand Roi," exclaimed she, "avez vous fait batir ce Chateau, pour y faire mourir les enfans de votre petite fille!"

The western front is the work of Gaston Duke of Orleans, son of Henry the fourth, and brother to Louis the thirteenth. It is a beautiful and magnificent edifice, but was unhappily left incomplete by his death, in 1659. Mansard was the architect whom he employ'd in its construction; and more than three hundred thousand livres were uselessly expended on this sumptuous building, which is uninhabitable and already far gone in decay. Gaston himself foretold the future state of incompleteness and ruin in

which it would be left ; and in that conviction exclaimed as he lay expiring, “ *Domus mea, domus desolationis in eternum !* ” All the other designs and plans of alteration which he had begun, were laid aside at his decease.

The gardens of the castle which were formerly very extensive, are now converted into private property, and the superb gallery, which was constructed by Henry the fourth to divide the upper and lower gardens, is only to be traced in its ruins, as it was demolished about thirteen years ago by order of the court. The walk of Catherine of Medicis, however, still subsists ; it is of a prodigious length, extending to the forest of Blois, and forming an avenue to the castle truly royal.

I went yesterday to visit Chambord, the famous palace of Francis the first, which is about four leagues from hence, on the southern side of the Loire. It stands in a low situation, surrounded by deep woods, and has all the appearance of one of Tasso's or Ariosto's enchanted castles, raised out of the earth by magic powers. The magnitude of the whole structure, together with the numerous turrets, pinnacles,

cles, domes, and towers, over which the lapse of two centuries begins to throw an air of decay, and waning splendor, produce an effect on the beholder hard to be described. Thick forests surround it on all sides, and in the front flows or rather stagnates a little river called the Cousson, black, and full of sedges. The palace, conformable to the taste of the age in which it was built, is moated round; but the architecture of it, tho' strictly Gothic, is full of beauty, and elegance. A grand stair-case in the center of the building, leads to the different ranges of apartments; and by a singular contrivance it is rendered double, so that two persons may ascend or descend at the same time without ever seeing or meeting each other. Tho' I cannot pretend to explain, or give you an exact idea how this effect is produced, yet it is curious and unique in its kind.

The chambers, tho' now unfurnished, and beginning to feel the injurious effects of time, are still extremely magnificent. Those which were occupied by the late Marechal Saxe, are not entirely without furniture, and have

been in some degree modernized. In many of them beams are stretched across to support the cielings, which exceedingly deform the appearance of the rooms. Catherine of Medicis who had been informed by an astrologer, that she was in danger of being crushed under the ruins of a house, caused them to be placed in this manner, to secure her from the fatal consequences of the prediction.

I enquired much after the pane of glass, on which were formerly seen the two lines written with a diamond, by the hand of Francis the first. They were in a little closet communicating with the chapel, but are now lost by some accident. They were these :

“ *Toute Femme varie.*

“ *Mal habil qui s’y fie !*”—

Some vexation, caused by his mistress’s caprice or inconstancy, probably gave occasion to this severe sarcasm on the sex.

Immense sums of money were expended by Francis the first in the construction of Chambord, and eighteen hundred workmen were employed during twelve years in its completion.

pletion. There are said to be twelve hundred large, and four hundred smaller apartments in the palace. Francis entertained the Emperor Charles the fifth there, with his accustomed magnificence and splendour, during the visit which that prince paid him on the rebellion of the Gantois, in 1540. Henry the second made some additions to the palace. His father's device, a " Salamander in the flames " is seen in almost every part of the building ; and on one small tower only, I discover'd those of Henry himself, a " crescent, " with the letter H."

After having stay'd more than three hours in the different galleries or apartments, I sat down on the bank of the rivulet in front of the palace, to contemplate it at leisure. I spread my cold provisions on the grass, under the shade of two ancient elms, and after having dined, resigned myself to all that train of reflection naturally excited by the view of so magnificent a structure.

Since the decease of Marechal Saxe, Chambord is going fast to decay. Louis the fourteenth made several visits to it, to enjoy the

pleasure of hunting, but his successor, the late king, totally neglected it, and many hundred thousand livres must now be expended on the palace, before it could be rendered fit to lodge and receive a sovereign. Its immense magnitude, which makes it require continual repairs, will necessarily hasten its downfall, and motives of œconomy will probably produce in some future time its entire demolition.

The city of Blois is meanly built, and many of the houses are of equal antiquity with the castle itself. It lies on the declivity of the hill along the northern bank of the river, and is joined to a considerable suburb on the opposite side of the Loire, by a modern bridge. No language can describe the beauty of the Loire, or the fertility of the country through which it flows. The extreme poverty and misery of the peasants, in the midst of a delicious paradise, producing in the greatest abundance all the necessaries and elegancies of life, impresses me with pity, wonder and indignation. I see much magnificence, but still more distress; one princely Chateau, surrounded with a thousand wretched hamlets;

lets; the most studied and enervate luxury among the higher orders of society, contrasted with beggary and nakedness among the people; a gaiety, a softness, and an urbanity, universally characteristic of every rank, and to which it is impossible to refuse attachment and admiration.

To-morrow morning I continue my progress slowly along the Loire.

Tours, Tuesday, 21st of May, 1776.

THE road from Blois to this city is one of the most agreeable in France, and lies along the bank of the river Loire. Hills, whose sides are covered with vines, forests, among which appear spires and villas; or wide plains cultivated with the greatest industry, continually diversify and enliven the scene.

I stop'd during more than two hours to view the castle of Chaumont. It is built on a high point of land about five leagues below Blois, on the southern bank of the Loire, and commanding a most extensive prospect. The pile is Gothic, and was constructed about the middle of the fifteenth century by the Lords of the house of Amboise. The Cardinal of that name, the virtuous and incorrupt minister of Louis the twelfth, was himself born there, and the devices of his family are yet distinctly to be traced on the great towers of the castle. They consist of two letters **CC** interwoven, and under them, a volcano; this
conceit,

conceit, by a sort of pun which in that age^e was much admir'd, formed the word "Chau-
 "Mont." Henry the second made a present
 of the castle to his mistress Diana de Poitiers,
 duchess of Valentinois, so celebrated in the
 annals of France. She improved and enlarg'd
 it very considerably, and the "hunting horn,"
 one of her emblems, appears in many parts of
 the building. On the death of her royal
 lover in 1559, Catherine of Medicis, who had
 long envied her the possession of Chaumont,
 rather compelled than requested the duchess to
 renounce it in her favour; but by an act of
 generosity becoming a queen, she presented
 Diana in return, the palace of Chenonceaux-
 sur-Cher. Soon after the death of Catherine,
 Chaumont fell into the hands of the Viscount
 de Sardini, a Lucques nobleman who had
 married a lady of the house of Limeuil, dis-
 tantly allied to that princess by blood. His
 descendants are now extinct.—Exactly op-
 posite to it, and about a mile distant from the
 Loire, stands the castle of Onzain, in which
 Louis prince of Conde, who was afterwards
 killed at Jarnac in 1569, was imprisoned by

Catherine of Medicis after the battle of Dreux, and during the subsequent siege of Orleans.

I arrived at Amboise the same evening. The town is mean and ill built, but has been rendered famous in history by the conspiracy of the protestants in 1560, which opened the fatal wars of religion in France. The castle is situated on a craggy rock, extremely difficult of access, and the sides of which are almost perpendicular. At its foot flows the Loire, which is divided into two streams by a small island. I am not surprized that the duke of Guise, when he expected an insurrection among the Hugonots, chose to remove Francis the second to this fortress, as to a place of perfect security. Only two detached parts of the ancient castle now remain, one of which was constructed by Charles the eighth, and the other by Francis the first. It is perhaps unnecessary to remind you that the former of those princes was born and died at Amboise. From the hill behind the castle, is seen another of those enchanting landscapes, which these provinces of France continually exhibit,

exhibit, and where the eye is delighted with a profusion of natural beauties.

I went the ensuing day to Chanteloup, the palace of the Duke de Choiseul, about a mile from Amboise. Neither the situation nor the exposition are, in my opinion, happy ones. The prospect which it commands, is very limited, and the Loire, altho' at so inconsiderable a distance, is scarcely seen even from the upper apartments. The rooms which I was allow'd to view, tho' splendid, were equally destitute of any production of painting or of sculpture; and fell far short of the magnificent ideas which I had been taught to preconceive of Chanteloup. The Duke has notwithstanding spent immense sums on this palace, and is at present employed in constructing additional chambers, which will surpass all those already finished, in grandeur and elegance.

I continued my journey to this city. Tours is built in a fine plain on the southern bank of the Loire. The surrounding country surpasses in fertility even all I have yet seen, and every eminence within several miles of the place is occupied either by convents

or villas. Among the former, is the celebrated monastery of Marmoutier, from whence Isabella of Bavaria, queen of Charles the sixth, was carried off in 1417, by John "Sans
"Peur" duke of Burgundy.

I made an excursion yesterday to Loches, which is ten leagues distant from this place, through a delicious plain watered by the Cher, the Indre, and a number of rivulets that fertilize the meadows among which they wind their course. The castle of Loches is very famous in the history of France, and was in former ages the usual place of confinement for prisoners of the highest quality.[†] Its origin remounts to the most remote antiquity, nor is there any tradition which pretends to ascertain the name of its founder, or the time of its construction. It has been enlarged, rebuilt and fortified by successive sovereigns. Charles the seventh frequently held his court and residence there during the former part of his reign; and René, duke of Alençon, one of the princes of the blood royal, was long detained there a prisoner by that monarch's order, on account of his treasonable practices, for the introduction of the English into the
† Philip de Comines was confined here. kingdom.

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kingdom.——In one of the apartments is the iron cage, in which Louis the eleventh confined the Cardinal de la Balue more than nine years. This inhuman engine of punishment is not above eleven feet square. The Cardinal was at length released in 1481, at the intercession of the reigning pope, during the long state of weakness and debility which preceded the king's decease.

I went to view the chamber where the perfidious Ludovico Sforza the Moor, duke of Milan, was imprisoned by Louis the twelfth, from the year 1500 to 1510. It is a large apartment, vaulted, and in that age, was not improper for the confinement of a sovereign prince. Only one window, secured by three gratings of iron, admits light into the room, and in the midst of summer the rays of the sun enter through this opening, about the hour of noon, for a few minutes. On the wall, exactly opposite to the window, are distinctly to be traced the remains of a dial or meridian, upon which the beams of the sun darts; and which, as constant tradition relates, was cut by the hand of Sforza to amuse himself in his hours.

hours of solitude. Over the chimney is the figure of a head supposed to be his, and cover'd with a helmet. The walls and roof are likewise covered with characters and inscriptions now rendered illegible by the lapse of time.

I quitted this chamber, and descended with my guide by the light of a torch into the "Oubliettes," or subterranean dungeons. They are Labyrinths hollowed into the earth, of a vast extent and totally destitute of light. The air itself was so moist and unwholesome, that it almost extinguished the flambeau. The man who attended me, made me remark circular holes in many places of the incumbent rock, through which they let down the wretched victims destined to perish in these caverns. Doors of massy iron closed up the entrance, and prevented all possibility of succour or escape. I was glad to leave these dismal abodes of darkness and horror, to revisit the chearful day.——The greater part of the castle of Loches is now in ruins; but it is notwithstanding still used for the confinement of persons accused of crimes of state; and there is at present a gentleman there, the cause of
 whose

whose imprisonment is not known, who has been immur'd more than three years.

In the principal church of Loches, before the high altar, is interr'd the celebrated Agnes Soreille, mistress to Charles the seventh, who died in 1449. The monument is composed of black marble, and on it are her effigies executed in white alabaster. If the figure may be supposed to have resembled her person, she was feminine and delicate to the utmost degree of which the human body is susceptible. The face is perfectly correspondent to the other parts, and conveys an idea of uncommon loveliness mixed with exquisite fragility. Her hands which are joined in the act of prayer, are models of symmetry and proportion. Round her head is tied a broad fillet studded with pearls, and a sort of necklace composed of the same ornaments falls on her bosom. She lies upon an embroider'd cushion; her dress is simple and modest, concealing her limbs from view, and at her feet are placed two lambs emblematical of her name, Agnes. Time has begun to injure and deface the figure and the tomb in many parts. I looked at it
with

with extreme satisfaction during some minutes, nor was it merely the recollection of the personal charms she once possessed, that detained and affected me:—the magnanimity which actuated her conduct, and which she infused into her lover, when sinking under the superior power of his enemies, render her memory deservedly dear to every feeling mind; nor, among the many favourites of princes whose names history has preserved, does any one appear to have been more worthy of a monarch's attachment, and a nation's love, than was Agnes Soreille. You will recollect, I doubt not, the verses of Francis the first in her honour, which particularly allude to her efforts to inspire Charles the seventh with fortitude and courage against the English, the invaders of his dominions.——A thousand fables respecting her, are yet preserved among the inhabitants of Loches; her beauty, her liberality, and her power over the king form the principal subjects of these traditions. I listened to them all with extreme pleasure; and afterwards went to look at the tower, which is called “La Tour de la belle Agnes,” and in which,

as my conductor assured me with great simplicity, Charles used, from motives of jealousy, to confine her when he went to the chace. — It is certain that she resided frequently at Beaulieu, a little town only divided from Loches by the river Indre, and where are still seen the remains of a Chateau which belonged to her. As she died at the abbey of Jumieges in Normandy, her body was brought by her express command to this church, to which in her life-time she had made very ample donations. Louis the eleventh, tho' he neither honour'd his father's memory, nor respected Agnes, to whom it is pretended he once gave a blow at Chinon in Touraine, yet protected her remains, and rejected the petition of the canons of the church, who by an act of ingratitude to their benefactress had requested that her tomb might be removed and demolished.

I had always read and been informed, that Ludovico Sforza, the duke of Milan, was likewise buried in the chancel of the same church of Loches, under a plate of copper. All the French writers—even their best historians assert

assert it as an incontestible fact.—There is notwithstanding nothing more false, and it is one of those many errors which have been sanctified by long prescription. The plate of copper indeed exists; but one of the priests obligingly read to me the inscription upon it, which is to the memory of a private family. A portrait of a warrior kneeling and in prayer, which has been always shewn as Sforza's figure, the same person assured me is that of the duke of Epernon.—No traces of any such interment are to be found among the records of the church, tho' the account of that of Agnes Soreille, anterior by sixty years, yet exists.—I must own this contradiction to so received an opinion may appear extraordinary;—but how many supposed facts of history might be found to depend upon as erroneous a foundation!

I am just returned from the castle of Plesses-Tours, so famous for having been the scene of the illness and death of Louis the eleventh, in 1483. Do you remember Philip de Comines' minute and terrifying picture of that event?—I felt a secret horror as I entered the court, and.

and survey'd the walls once covered with iron spikes, where a continual guard kept watch during the last, sad hours of the guilty and expiring monarch. Plessiez is situated only half a league from this city, in a plain surrounded by woods, at a little distance from the Loire. The building is yet handsome, tho' only compos'd of brick, and now converted to purposes of commerce. In the chapel, on the right hand of the high altar, is a masterly and beautiful portrait of Louis the eleventh himself, dressed in complete armour. Within his left arm, which lies on his breast, is a standard, and with his right hand he takes off his helmet, in the act of salutation to the Virgin Mary and her infant. His harsh and unpleasing features are softened into a smile of pleasure and complacency. He seems to extend his left hand towards the child, whose eye is fix'd on his with eagerness. These indications of tenderness have given room to suppose, that by the figures of Mary and of our Saviour, are designed Charlotte of Savoy his queen, and Charles the eighth his son. Her habit, which is royal,

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the diadem on her head, and more than all, a resemblance between the infant and the king which is very striking, strongly confirm this supposition.

Tho' Tours is at present an unpleasant and ill built place, it will probably be greatly changed in a few years. A very noble bridge of fifteen arches is already built across the river, and a street is planned which will intersect the whole city. These alterations will tend much to its embellishment.

My journey begins now to draw towards an end, but you may yet hear once or twice from
Yours, &c.

Mans,

Mans, Tuesday, 28th of May, 1776.

IT is with regret that I find myself at a distance from the banks of the Loire, along which I have wander'd with so sensible a pleasure. The beauty of the country on either side, the number of magnificent edifices reflected in its surface, the solemn majesty of its course, at one time, amidst islands, woods, and delicious plains, and at others, under high and hanging rocks, conspire to awaken at this enchanting season, sentiments of extreme delight.

At Langeais about seven leagues from Tours, I stop'd to examine the remains of the castle, which are yet noble, tho' decayed and in ruins. It is rendered celebrated in history by the nuptials of Anne of Bretagne with Charles the eighth, which were solemnized there in 1488. I arrived at the city of Saumur the same evening. You may imagine that I could not be within five leagues of the abbey of Fontevrauld, where Henry the second and Richard the first
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of England are interred, without a desire to visit the place. It is situated in a valley near the confines of Anjou, on the side of Touraine. Rocky hills rise behind it, and thick woods conceal it almost entirely from view. An air of melancholy and silence reigns on all sides, peculiarly characteristic of, and suitable to the gloomy devotion of monastic life. As I walked under the high and venerable rows of elms in the gardens of the convent, it was impossible for me not to feel in some degree those awful sensations which are naturally inspired by these religious solitudes.—The abbey was founded in the year 1096, by Robert d'Arbrissel. Its reputation for sanctity, and its vicinity to Chinon, at which city Henry the second died, were probably the causes of his being interred at Fontevraud, as none of his progenitors the Counts of Anjou had chosen it for their place of burial. You may perhaps remember that sentiments of penitence and contrition for his filial disobedience, induced Richard the first to order in his dying moments, that his body should be laid at the feet of his father, Henry.

Eleanor

THROUGH FRANCE. 193

Eleanor of Aquitain, wife of the one and mother of the other prince, lies buried in the same tomb; as do likewise Jane Queen of Sicily and countess of Provence, daughter to Henry the second; and Elizabeth of Angoulême, widow to John King of England:—The figures of all these sovereigns are carved in stone upon the monument itself; but as that is enclosed within the grate, in the part of the choir where the Abbess and Nuns assemble for public devotion, no interest or intreaties could possibly procure me admittance into this sacred enclosure; and I was consequently prevented from observing it with that minuteness and attention which I could have wish'd. Four solemn Requiems and services are said every year for the repose of the souls of these princes, and the tomb was repaired and beautified in the year 1638, by order of the reigning Abbess.

Fontevrauld, besides the respect derived from it's antiquity, has been ever considered as one of the most honourable and important ecclesiastical benefices in France. Many princesses of the blood have successively governed it, and

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the revenues are immense. The number of religious of both sexes under the Abbess's direction, amount to more than two hundred, and her authority both temporal and spiritual is very extensive.

I returned to Saumur the same evening, and left it again last Saturday. The town is small, but pleasantly situated on the Loire, across which is a long bridge, continued through a number of islands. Saumur was anciently a most important pass over the river, and of consequence was frequently and fiercely disputed by either party, during the civil wars of France in the sixteenth century. The fortifications are of great strength, and Henry the fourth, on the reconciliation which took place between him and Henry the third near Tours in 1589, demanded that Saumur should be delivered to him, as one of the cities of safety. The castle overlooks the town and river. It is built on a lofty eminence, and has a venerable and magnificent appearance, tho' now only used as a prison of state, where persons of rank are frequently confined. The Kings of Sicily and Dukes of Anjou of
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THROUGH FRANCE. 195

the house of Valois, who descended from John King of France, often resided in the castle of Saumur, as it constituted a part of their Angevin dominions.

The distance from Saumur to Angers is about thirteen leagues, and the greater part of the road lies along the banks of the Loire. Anjou appears to me not to yield in fertility or beauty to any province of the kingdom. Wines of the most delicious and exquisite flavour are produced in it, among which that of Champigny, a little village near Fontevraud, is particularly admir'd.—I made a stay of two days in Angers. The city stands in a plain, and is divided into “La haute” and “La basse ville” by the river Mayenne, which winds thro’ meadows, and falls into the Loire five miles below the place. The castle was built by St. Louis, about the middle of the thirteenth century. The walls, fosses, and numerous towers which yet subsist, evince its former magnificence ; and its situation in the center of the city, on a rock overhanging the river, conduces to give it an air of grandeur, tho’ at present in decay. It

was the principal residence of the Kings of Sicily, as Dukes of Anjou, but is now in a state of total ruin. The cathedral of Angers is a venerable structure, and altho' it has undergone many alterations in the course of ages since its construction, yet the architecture is singular and deserves attention. Here lies interred with her ancestors the renown'd Margaret, daughter of René King of Sicily, and Queen of Henry the sixth of England. She expired, after her many intrepid, but ineffectual efforts to replace her husband on the throne, in the year 1482, at the castle of Dampierre in Anjou. The English historians seem never to have paid any attention to this illustrious Princess in her retirement and obscurity, after Louis the eleventh of France had ransom'd her from Edward the fourth, and procured her release from the Tower of London. She was the favourite child of René, who solemnly renounced in favour of the king of France, all his claims on the province of Anjou and the duchy of Lorraine, to obtain her freedom. In his court, and under his protection, she remained at Aix in Provence, the usual place

place of that Prince's residence, 'till his death obliged her to return into the Angevin territories. She was there receiv'd by a gentleman nam'd Vignole, who had been long in her father's service, and who afforded her an asylum. Henry Earl of Richmond, who was afterwards victorious at Bosworth, and who was then a fugitive in Bretagne, went from Vannes to visit her, and ask her advice. She strongly urged him to his attempt against the house of York, which then reigned in England, tho' she did not survive to be a witness of his success against Richard the third. No remains of that commanding beauty, which she had once possessed, accompanied her in the decline of life. A French writer has drawn the portrait of Margaret when near her end; and it impresses both with horror and compassion. You will not recognize the Queen describ'd by our historians in such animated language, and with such flattering colours.—“ Son sang corrompu
 “ par tant de noires agitations, devint comme
 “ une poison qui infecta toutes les parties
 “ qu'il devoit nourrir ; sa peau secha jusqu' à

“ s'en aller en poussiere ; son estomac se re-
 “ trecit, et ses yeux aussi creux que s'ils
 “ eussent été enfoncés avec violence, perdi-
 “ rent tout le feu qui avoit servi si long temps
 “ d'interprete aux grands sentimens de son
 “ ame.”

Angers is of a very considerable size, but
 the buildings and streets are almost as mean
 and as old as those of Bourges. The walls
 with which John king of England surrounded
 it in 1214, remain nearly entire, and are of
 a very large circumference.

I slept last night at La Fleche, a pretty
 town on the confines of Anjou. In the
 church which belong'd to the Jesuits, are the
 hearts of Henry the fourth and Mary of Me-
 dicis, which were deposited there by the
 express command of those princes. I entered
 the province of Maine this morning. It is
 ten leagues from La Fleche to Mans, through
 a country much enclosed and finely wooded.
 — The situation of this city is very pleasant,
 near the junction of two little rivers which
 wind through a delicious plain. I went to
 the top of the cathedral, to enjoy one of the
 finest

finest inland prospects to be imagined. Towards Normandy and Perche it is lost in clouds at a great distance, and on the side of Bretagne extends the forest of Mans, the scene of that extraordinary phantom which is said to have appeared to Charles the sixth of France, and which was a principal cause of his consequent insanity. The city of Mans is small, but preferable to Angers in elegance and regularity. It formerly constituted, together with the province of which it is the capital, a part of our Henry the second's hereditary dominions, which he added to those devolved to him at king Stephen's death, in right of his mother Matilda. In the year 1216 Philip Augustus reconquered Maine from John, and annex'd the province to the crown of France.

I shall continue my journey in the evening to Alençon. Adieu !

Rouen, Monday, 3d June, 1776.

IT was already late when I left Mans, and as Alençon is twelve leagues distant, I was obliged to stop at a little town named "Beaumont-Le-Viscomte," situated near the confines of Maine and Normandy, on the side of a steep hill, at the foot of which runs a rivulet, and from whence a delicious landscape is seen on all sides, richly cultivated. I got to Alençon the ensuing morning. The place is of considerable size, washed by the little river Sarte, and stands in the midst of an extensive plain. I slept at Seéz, an ancient city, and continued my route next day to L'Aigle, a small town, but well known in history by its castle, tho' scarce any traces of it now remain. Our annals inform us that William the Conqueror frequently resided there in his visits to these his hereditary dominions; and Charles d'Espagne de la Cerda, Constable of France in the reign of John, was surpriz'd and murder'd at L'Aigle in the year 1354, by Charles the Bad, King of Navarre.

I crossed

THROUGH FRANCE. 201

I crossed a considerable part of Normandy to the city of Evreux, which is situated in a deep vale surrounded with lofty hills ; and pursuing my journey, arrived here last Friday. Rouen is too well known and too frequently visited, to render any long description of it necessary. The Seine is beautiful both above, and below the place, covered with little islands overgrown with wood, and running at the foot of a range of lofty mountains. Near its bank, at one extremity of the city, are yet seen the remains of the palace which Henry the fifth of England began in 1419, and which was completed under his unfortunate son Henry the sixth in 1443. At a small distance from it is a tower, called " La Tour de la Pucelle," in which John Duke of Bedford confined the Maid of Orleans previous to her trial. You will recollect her subsequent condemnation and death. A statue is erected to her on the spot where this cruel sentence was executed, and an inscription engraven beneath it in her honour. Who would not die, to merit two of the lines which compose it?

———" Exit

——“ Exuit flammis quod mortale,

“ Superest gloria nunquam moritura !”——

They exalt her above mortality, and enroll her to the most remote posterity, with the great spirits who in different ages have sacrificed their lives for their country. It is the highest tribute which man can pay to virtue.

I went yesterday morning to visit a little priory, called “ Notre Dame de bonnes Nouvelles,” situated on the southern bank of the Seine, and which was founded by William the Conqueror previous to his successful attempt on the English crown. It is said that his wife Matilda, being at her devotions in this church, intelligence arrived that the duke of Normandy had gained the important battle of Hastings; and from this circumstance it obtained the name which it retains at present. Matilda, daughter of Henry the first, and mother of Henry the second, kings of England, was buried there; but six hundred years have totally erased the inscription on her tomb, of which there are now no traces discernible. This princess, as being duchess of Normandy, resided frequently at Rouen, and she constructed

structed the ancient bridge across the Seine, of which the ruins yet remain, tho' it began to fall as early as the year 1502, and became totally useless before the conclusion of the sixteenth century.

The cathedral is one of the most magnificent monuments of Gothic architecture to be found in France. It was built under William the Conqueror's reign, and entirely completed in 1063. I tread with reverence among the tombs of the numerous kings and princes who are interred in different parts of the edifice. Here lies Rollo the Dane, founder of the Norman line, destined to ascend the English throne; a hero almost lost in the barbarism and distance of the times in which he flourish'd! Two of his descendants, Dukes of Normandy, are buried near him.—The heart of Richard the first King of England, which when dying he ordered to be deposited in the cathedral of Rouen, is placed on the right hand of the high altar. It was originally preserv'd in a shrine of massy silver; but during the extreme distress occasioned by the want of money to defray the expences

expences of St. Louis's ransom when taken prisoner at Damietta in Egypt, this splendid repository was applied to the necessities of the state. Prince Henry, the elder brother of Richard, who died at the castle of Martel in Quercy in 1183, lies buried on the opposite side. Near these, reposes John Duke of Bedford; an illustrious name revered even by his enemies, and almost without a blemish, if he had not condemned to death the Maid of Orleans, the deliverer of her country. Behind the altar, under a monument of exquisite workmanship, is interr'd the great Cardinal of Amboise, minister to Louis the twelfth, whose memory France will honour as long as patriotism and integrity are cherished among men. He is represented on the tomb, kneeling and in prayer. I stood long to consider the monument of Louis de Brezé, Senechal of Normandy and Count de Maulevrier, who died in 1531. The figure of the Count himself extended at full length, is one of the most masterly and beautiful productions of the chissel. On one side is the Virgin Mary, and on the other appears his widow the celebrated

brated Diana de Poitiers, afterwards the favourite mistress of Henry the second. She looks down on the body of her husband; grief is marked in her features, and her dress is that of a mourner. The whole monument is a model of beauty and delicacy of sculpture.

Rouen, tho' large and enriched by commerce, is not an elegant city. The streets are almost all narrow, crooked and dirty; the buildings old and irregular. It was fortified by St. Louis in 1253, but the walls are now demolished. The environs, more peculiarly the hills which overlook the Seine, are wonderfully agreeable, and covered with magnificent villas.

My stay here will be very short. I purpose to embark at Dieppe for England, and shall probably see you in a few days.—I have compleated the design which I laid down at my setting out, that of visiting the unfrequented provinces of France. Throughout my whole tour I have studiously endeavour'd to avoid the ground usually trod by the English in their passage from Calais into Italy, as

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being too well known to afford you any information. It only remains for me to claim your candour and indulgence ; on that I rely, and remain

Dear Sir,

Your's, &c. &c.

NATH^L WILLM WRAXALL.

F I N I S.

Un Eclaircissement de la Justice de Dieu
des Hérétiques de l'Histoire de Vaudou, par P. Bér.
un Rapport du Récit 1669, 170, 171.

" Il est arrivé à peu près de même en la Délivrance
" des Vaudou, Dieu a mis la Division entre les Roi
" de France & le Duc de Savoie, pour les punir des
" Mauva qu'ils ont fait aux Protestants. Les deux
" Princes étoient également les Ennemis de Vaudou,
" ils leur faisoient conjointement la Guerre, &
" accablent ensemble leurs Sujets, leur Verté. et lors
" qu'ils ont été plus acharnés l'un contre l'autre ces
" punitions innocentes Dieu soufflé sur leur Méchant
" Dessein & fit qu'ils tournent leurs Armes l'un par
" l'autre pour les perdre l'un par l'autre, comme il
" perdit le Duc de Guise par Henri, qui le fit assassi-
" ner dans Paris, & la Vie de toute la France
" assemblée en la personne de ceux qui compoient
" les Etats Generaux. Et après que Dieu eut puni le Duc
" de Guise des Mauva qu'il avoit fait aux Protestants
" de France, il puni aussi Henri, qui fut assassiné
" dans le Chateau de Blois par un Moine & dans la
" même suite on avoit tenu le Conseil qu'on prit de
" faire le Massacre de la St. Barthelemi dont Henri &
" Le Duc de Guise étoient les Principaux Conseillers, & les plus
" portés à faire cette horrible Toucherie. CXXVI.

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